

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 29 October 2010

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 29 October 2010

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Equality and Good Relations

Dr S Farry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their Department's position on the relationship between equality and good relations.

(AQW 926/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): Our Department's position is outlined in the draft CSI document and in the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

UK Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr S Anderson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 550/11, whether all Executive Ministers have fully discharged the agreed "collective and corporate approach to the major and unprecedented fiscal challenges" faced in the current economic situation.

(AQW 967/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive continues to work both collectively and through its Budget Review Group to develop and agree a response to the fiscal challenges it faces.

Aggregates Levy

Mr D Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with HM Revenue and Customs to ensure either the continuation of the relief from aggregates levy or that it is replaced with a suitable alternative.

(AQW 1153/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Following meetings with the Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister in recent weeks, we have written to the Prime Minister asking him to look again at the decision by the Economic Secretary, Justine Greening, to suspend the scheme from 1 November 2010.

We are very concerned that the Autumn Finance Bill which was to have provided for an extension of this vitally important scheme until 2021, now puts the aggregates industry in a difficult financial position.

Officials from DFP and DOE are liaising closely with counterparts in HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs to explore options for the continuation of the scheme. These discussions are ongoing.

Sexual Orientation Strategy

Ms D Purvis asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will continue to produce and implement the Sexual Orientation Strategy in the event that the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration is not implemented.

(AQW 1313/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The recent Cohesion, Sharing and Integration consultation document indicates that Ministers are fully committed to publishing the sexual orientation strategy. In

answer to AQO 121/11 on 27 September 2010, Junior Minister Newton reaffirmed to the Assembly the commitment to publish a Strategy and outlined how this work will be taken forward. He confirmed that a Strategy will be published.

Play and Leisure Policy

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they intend to publish their Play and Leisure policy.

(AQW 1355/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Play and Leisure Policy statement was published in 2009.

As a consequence of that the Play and Leisure Implementation Plan (the Plan) has been drafted. The Plan is currently with the OFMDFM Committee for consideration and the agreement of the Executive will be sought prior to the issue of the Plan for consultation.

It is anticipated that the Plan will be published for consultation shortly.

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many times the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People has met to date; and what actions have been taken forward following the meetings.

(AQW 1358/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People was established with the ultimate aim of improving the lives of children and young people here.

Since it was re-established under devolution in January 2008, the Ministerial Sub-Committee has met on seven occasions.

It identified 6 key priorities and established cross-departmental sub-groups and agreed associated action plans to take forward these issues. The sub-groups include: Child Poverty; Early Years; Provision for vulnerable young people; Safeguarding; Provision for children with special educational needs and Road Safety.

Each of the sub-groups have been working to achieve the actions contained in their respective action plans which, with the exception of the Child Poverty Action plan, were agreed by the Executive in March 2010.

The Child Poverty sub-group has been focusing its efforts on the identification of options for the future delivery of childcare and on developing an agreed definition of severe child poverty.

Phase one of their work was the development of an economic and policy appraisal in respect of childcare, which we will shortly bring to the Executive; and Phase two will be the development of a childcare strategy.

In the meantime, we intend to seek the Executive's agreement to the Child Poverty Sub-Group Action Plan.

We also intend to seek a progress report from each of the groups which we will bring to the Executive for agreement.

Prior to bringing any of these issues to the Executive, we will, of course, refer them to the Committee for consideration.

Quangos

Mr P Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what quangos with a Northern Ireland remit are proposed to be (i) abolished; or (ii) merged by the Westminster Government.

(AQW 1378/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Coalition Government proposals envisage the reform of some 310 public bodies. Options for reform include retention, transfer of functions, merger, change in status or abolition with functions either being discontinued or delivered in a different way.

We are currently consulting all departments about the nature of their involvement, either informal or statutorily based, with the bodies listed to enable us to make a comprehensive assessment of the implications for this administration and the need for the legislative consent of the Assembly to the changes proposed.

Executive Business

Ms M Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 995/11 & 938/11, whether they will outline their position on Executive business with regards to transparency and accountability mechanisms.

(AQW 1414/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: You will recall that, at its meeting of 13 September 2007, the Executive unanimously agreed a protocol on confidentiality to protect the process by which Executive decisions are reached. This protocol included the provisions that Ministers should avoid saying anything publicly which might anticipate the Executive's reaction, fetter its discretion or which could subsequently appear to breach the principle of collective Executive responsibility; and that Ministers should ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect the detailed content of papers and Executive minutes which are to be or have been considered by the Executive.

The Executive's position on this matter was further elucidated by the deputy First Minister in the Assembly Chamber in response to an oral question on 3 February 2010 when he stated that the confidentiality protocol protects the space for expression of views while facilitating the reaching of an agreed position and that it is essential that the Executive be allowed to conduct its work in an environment where individual Ministers can have confidence that the content of their papers and their views are protected. For that reason, information concerning details of Executive business is not normally released although it may be appropriate on occasion to provide information on the Executive's work on a particular issue.

Community Relations Council

Mr S Anderson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 503/11, whether their Department has ever identified any communities which were under-represented in the awarding of (i) core funding; and (ii) project funding by the Community Relations Council.

(AQW 1426/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As part of the development of the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, we intend to carry out a review of core funding or project funding (as currently delivered by the Community Relations Council). The public consultation on the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was launched on Tuesday 27 July 2010 and all responses to the consultation must be returned by the end of October 2010.

Further details of the consultation can be found online at <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/community-relations.htm> .

We would encourage you to take part in the consultation, particularly if you have ideas on how the funding to support the overall aim and themes of the programme can be delivered.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many apprentices have a placement within their Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1432/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: There are currently no apprenticeship placements confirmed for 2010/2011 within our Department or its arms-length bodies.

OFMDFM has, along with all other Departments, signed up to the Programme-led Apprenticeship programme which is sponsored by DEL.

Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Mr J Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many people attended the recent public meetings to discuss the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration; and for their assessment of the level of satisfaction with the document expressed at these meetings.

(AQW 1446/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The consultation on the draft Programme for Cohesion Sharing and Integration included 11 formal public meetings across a range of geographic locations. The details of the number of people who attended each event are included in the table below.

CSI VENUES AND NUMBERS

Date	Venue	Number of Attendees
Wednesday 1st September	City Hotel, Derry/Londonderry	54
Monday 6th September	Grosvenor House, Belfast	98
Tuesday 7th September	Arts Centre, Newry	16
Thursday 9th September	Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown	18
Monday 13th September	Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena	36
Wednesday 15th September	Clinton Centre, Enniskillen	19
Tuesday 21st September	Town Hall, Newtownards	57
Wednesday 22nd September	Seagoe Hotel Portadown	48
Monday 27th September	Armagh City Hotel	35
Wednesday 29th September	Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh	18
Tuesday 12th October	Lodge Hotel, Coleraine	12

As the consultation is still ongoing, it is not possible to comment on the attitudes of those who attended the meetings. All comments and suggestions received will be taken into consideration before the final version of the programme is published.

Ethnic Minority Development Fund for 2010-11

Ms A Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the groups which have received grants for core costs from their Department's Ethnic Minority Development Fund for 2010-11.

(AQW 1463/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The following groups are receiving development funding which includes core costs from the Department's Ethnic Minority Development Fund for 2010-11:

- South Belfast Partnership Board
- Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Forum
- SEEDS
- Old Warren Partnership Board
- South Tyrone Empowerment programme (STEP)
- Ballymoney Community Resource Centre/
Kilcranny House
- ArtsEkta
- Multi Cultural Resource Centre
- Chinese Welfare Association

- Barnardos
- Derry Travellers
- Wah Hep
- NICEM
- An Munia Tober
- East Belfast Independent Advice Centre
- Craigavon Intercultural Programme
- HomePlus NI
- GEMS
- Embrace
- Polish Association NI
- Craigavon Travellers Support Committee
- NICRAS

A full list of funded projects and organisations and amounts awarded is available in the Northern Ireland Assembly library.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr T Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for his assessment of the current workload of the Planning Appeals Commission.

(AQO 452/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body, which operates at arms length from Government and exercises its functions accordingly. Operational responsibility for the Commission including the deployment of resources to address the prevailing workload rests with the Chief Commissioner.

In the last five years the Commission has experienced significant workload pressures in relation to planning appeals, draft development plans and public inquiries into major planning proposals.

In recognition of the challenges and pressures facing the Commission and in line with our PSA 21 commitment, we have committed additional spending power of around £2 million over the three years 2008/11.

The additional resources we provided have enabled and are continuing to enable the Commission to address its workload pressures. We are pleased to note that to date the Commission has made significant progress in reducing the numbers of outstanding planning appeals from over 3,000 cases in 2007 to around 450 cases at present, and that the Chief Commissioner is considering how best to address the current challenge of increased major planning applications.

Our Department has no locus in relation to workload scheduling or decision making within the Commission. We are however responsible for the sponsorship and resourcing of the Commission and will continue to liaise closely with the Commission regarding its workload and associated resourcing issues.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Phytophthora Ramorum

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what tests are used to identify phytophthora ramorum in (i) Large Oak; (ii) Japanese Larch; (iii) Rhododendron; and (iv) other species.

(AQW 1150/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): Phytophthora ramorum is a fungus-like organism that can potentially infect over 140 diverse plant species, including oak, Japanese larch and Rhododendron, causing disease symptoms. A number of different methods are used in the field and the laboratory to diagnose the disease and identify the pathogen.

Lateral Flow Devices are small field kits which can be used to detect the presence of Phytophthora species. When taken alongside the observation of typical symptoms, which vary from host to host, they give strong indication that the cause of the symptoms on the plant is P. ramorum.

Laboratory isolation methods use selective media and specialist techniques to isolate the pathogen. *P. ramorum* forms distinctive sporulating structures – sporangia, chlamydozoospores and mycelia – which are used to confirm the identity of the pathogen, employing a microscope.

Molecular technology called polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is also used to identify the pathogen. Real time PCR is a highly specific and sophisticated DNA technology which can identify, very precisely, the presence of even small amounts of *P. ramorum* DNA. There is no danger of reporting a false positive.

A combination of these three methods is used, along with assessment of the symptoms. There are differences in the ease of detecting and identifying the pathogen according to host. It is relatively easy on hosts such as *Rhododendron* or *Viburnum* species to both isolate the pathogen and to detect it using PCR. On large woody hosts such as Japanese larch or oak isolation is more difficult because of the presence of fungal inhibitors in the wood, which can also have a negative effect on PCR.

However, DARD inspectors are fully trained to recognise the symptoms on larch or other large woody hosts, and to take appropriate samples from which the laboratories have the best opportunity to make an accurate diagnosis.

Phytophthora Ramorum

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what meetings her Department has had with the forestry commissions in other parts of the UK regarding identifying and tackling phytophthora ramorum.

(AQW 1151/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Forestry Commission GB has invited a representative of my Department's Forest Service to become a member of their Phytophthora ramorum Outbreak Management Team (OMT) in August. Officials have taken part in a number of meetings of the OMT by teleconference and by attendance in person. A Forestry Commission OMT member has visited the North to share Forestry Commission knowledge of management of the disease in Japanese larch with the Forest Service. In addition, Forest Service has also participated in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) Advisory Group Meetings on Phytophthora ramorum, set up to contain the spread of the disease in the South.

Phytophthora Ramorum

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she has taken to inform woodland owners and farmers of how to (i) identify phytophthora ramorum; and (ii) tackle phytophthora ramorum if it is discovered.

(AQW 1152/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I have chaired a meeting of forestry stakeholders in September outlining the steps my Department is taking to contain the recent outbreak of Phytophthora ramorum in Japanese larch, highlighting the symptoms of the disease and urging landowners to remain vigilant and report unusual symptoms in Japanese larch to the Forest Service. My Department has also issued press releases in August and September 2010, alerting landowners and farmers about the disease, and urging them to report unusual symptoms to the Forest Service. In addition, Forest Service officials have met with the forest industry representative body which includes woodland owner representatives, to update them about the symptoms of the disease and measures which are now in place to combat its spread.

On sites where infection by Phytophthora ramorum is confirmed by the Department, the person responsible for the site is served with a notice by DARD's Quality Assurance Branch, or in the case of Departmental woodland, is sent a letter, indicating that symptomatic Japanese larch and any other symptomatic foliar host species within a designated area are to be felled by a stated date and that the work must follow biosecurity protocols (included as part of the notice or letter) at all times.

Chip Initiative

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the review and analysis report on the Chip Initiative will be published.

(AQW 1155/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The 'Chip Initiative' project started in response to recommendations from the NI Potato Stakeholder Group report in 2005, with the overall aim of maximising the use of locally grown potatoes in the fresh chip market.

An interim report on the project was produced in 2008 and made available to the farmers and processors involved in the project and to others in the industry at events celebrating the International Year of the Potato. These took place at CAFRE's Greenmount Campus and at Crawfordsburn Country Park. The project concluded earlier this year and the final report is expected to be published in November.

Phytophthora Ramorum

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department's guidance to landowners on phytophthora ramorum differs from the guidance followed by the Forestry Service.

(AQW 1156/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Where the Quality Assurance Branch (QAB) of my Department has reasonable grounds for suspecting that Phytophthora ramorum is present on a woodland site, a QAB official will require those responsible for the site, where the infection is present or suspected, to take appropriate measures. A statutory notice, detailing requirements, is issued to private land owners while in the case of land managed by Forest Service, QAB issue a letter instead of a notice but the same measures are required. Hence the specified actions, such as felling of Japanese larch trees and observance of bio-security protocols, apply equally to both Forest Service and private woodland infected by Pramorum.

Rural Development Programme

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the total budget of the Rural Development Programme; and (ii) the amount spent to date, broken down by administration and the grants awarded.

(AQW 1195/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The total allocation for the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-13, as approved by the European Commission is €689,710,615 euros. This equates to approximately £540 million sterling.

The amount spent to the end of September 2010 is £204.95 million, of which £5.15 million is administration and £199.8 million is grants awarded.

Defending Litigation Cases

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what the legal costs were to her Department of defending litigation cases in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1207/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The legal costs to my Department of defending litigation cases in each of the last three financial years were:

2007/08	£235,849.16
2008/09	£223,747.43
2009/10	£307,902.87

Dog Owners

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many dog owners have been prosecuted in each of the last three years for (i) attacks on people; and (ii) attacks on other dogs.
(AQW 1222/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Local Councils are responsible for enforcing all aspects of the Dogs Order 1983, including the provisions on dangerous dogs, and are required to provide statistical information to my Department relating to the operation of the Order.

The information that my Department holds on prosecutions relating to dog attacks on people and animals is provided at Table 1.

It is not an offence under the 1983 Dogs Order for a dog to attack another dogs, therefore the Councils do not provide my Department with specific statistical information on such incidents.

You may wish to be aware that Clause 6 of the Dogs (Amendment) Bill, which is currently in front of the Assembly, amends the 1983 Dogs Order to make it an offence to set a dog on, or to urge a dog to attack a dog owned by another person. Clause 7 of the Bill makes it an offence to allow a dog to attack and injure a dog owned by another person.

TABLE 1

DOG ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS – SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTIONS

Year	Successful prosecutions for attacks on people	Successful prosecutions for attacks on animals
2007	38	5
2008	37	5
2009	49	14

Overpayments to Contractors

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether her Department has made any overpayments to contractors in each of the last five years; if so to detail (ii) the goods or services which were overpaid; (iii) the projects to which the overpayments related; (iv) the value of the overpayments; (v) whether the overpayments were successfully reclaimed from the companies or individuals overpaid.

(AQW 1231/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The National Fraud Initiative data matching exercise identified 4 overpayments totalling £20,709.39 for goods and services. All were fully recovered and are detailed in Annex 1.

The Department has not recorded any losses relating to overpayments to contractors in its Resource Accounts for any of the last five years. Other information not captured by the data matching exercise relating to overpayments that may have taken place but were successfully reclaimed is not readily available.

To extract this information would require individual business areas within the Department to review their records and to do so would result in disproportionate costs.

ANNEX I**SUMMARY OF OVERPAYMENTS FULLY RECOUPED**

Date	Contractor	Goods/ Service	Project	Value	Recouped
Total 05/06				NIL	
27/04/06	CDR Group	Software Maintenance	None	3,757.65	Yes
Total 06/07				3,757.65	
02/07/07	Maxol Direct	Oil	None	2,806.61	Yes
20/11/07	Eurest	Catering	None	7,842.47	Yes
Total 07/08				10,649.08	
22/05/08	Jacobs Engineering	Engineering	Moneyhaw River	6,302.66	Yes
Total 08/09				6,302.66	
Total 09/10				NIL	
DARD Total				20,709.39	

Threat to Baby Shellfish in Carlingford Lough

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will have the threat to baby shellfish in Carlingford Lough from the disease OshV-1 included on the agenda for the next North-South Ministerial Council Aquaculture and Marine Sectoral meeting.

(AQW 1252/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: NSMC meetings in the Aquaculture and Marine sectoral format cover the work of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission. However, fish health is not a function of the FCILC/Loughs Agency at present and remains the responsibility of DARD in the north. OshV1 is a fish health matter and is being actively dealt with by Fisheries Division in DARD who work closely at official level with DAFF and the Marine Institute, who are responsible for fish health matters in the south.

There would also be communications and sharing of information between DARD and the Loughs Agency where required. Any unusual occurrence or development which was impacting on shellfish in Carlingford Lough may, of course, be reported to NSMC through the Chief Executive's progress report.

I can confirm that the north of Ireland has not had any reports of mortalities attributable to OshV1 and recent DARD testing for the disease in Carlingford Lough has returned negative.

DARD will continue to liaise with Pacific oyster producers and the British and Irish authorities in controlling this emerging disease and in responding to the EC review, due by April 2011, of Regulation 175/2010/EC which regulates movements from affected areas.

Mackerel Fishing

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assessment she has made of the potential that mackerel fishing brings to the fishing industry; and for her assessment of its uptake by local trawler operators.

(AQW 1253/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Of the mackerel stocks fished by our vessels by far the most significant is the “West Coast” or North East Atlantic Mackerel stock. Our two producer organisations (POs) hold 9.9 per cent of the Total Allowable Catch of this stock allocated to Britain and the north of Ireland. Approximately 60 per cent of this is held by one locally owned vessel. Two other locally owned vessels have quota holdings for mackerel and participate in the fishery. Approximately 25 % of the PO holding is in respect of Scottish based vessels which are in the membership of one of our POs.

The “West Coast” mackerel allocation is fully fished every year, however in the last two years the largest local holder has leased quota to other vessels whilst a replacement vessel was being built. This new vessel commenced fishing in August this year.

Over the last three years the landings of mackerel by British and the north’s vessels into our ports has averaged 2,039 tonnes per year, valued at approximately £1.6m. This represents around 12 per cent of the quota held by the two local POs. Mackerel landings into the north are limited by remoteness from the main mackerel fishing grounds and lack of deep water port facilities that can accommodate the largest pelagic fishing vessels. However the landings which do take place are important for local processors.

Laying Birds

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the number of laying birds currently in production; and the anticipated numbers that will exist following the introduction of the ban on laying cages in 2012.

(AQW 1254/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Council Directive 99/74/EC came into force in July 1999 and laid down minimum welfare standards for the protection of laying hens. It banned the installation of new conventional or “battery” cages from January 2003, and the keeping of laying hens in existing conventional cages from January 2012. The Directive was transposed into domestic legislation here in July 2002 through the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2002.

There are just over 3.5 million laying hens currently in production here. It is not possible to anticipate the number of laying hens that will be in production in 2012. However, I recognise the steps that the local industry is taking to comply with the deadline to phase out the use of conventional cages, and indeed since 2003 all new installations of laying hen systems have been of the enriched cage type, free range, barn or organic.

Dog Owners

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any proposed legislation from her Department will address the issue of dog owners who allow their dogs to attack other dogs.

(AQW 1377/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Clause 6 of the Dogs (Amendment) Bill, which is currently before the Assembly, amends the 1983 Dogs Order to make it an offence to set a dog on or to urge a dog to attack a dog owned by another person. Clause 7 of the Bill makes it an offence to allow a dog to attack and injure a dog owned by another person. Setting a dog on or urging a dog to attack another dog will carry a maximum fine on conviction of £2,500. Allowing a dog to attack and injure another dog will carry a maximum fine on conviction of £1,000.

The Bill is currently with the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development, which is due to report by 29 November 2010.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

2013 World Police and Fire Games.

Mr P Frew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the sporting venues outside Belfast that will be used for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

(AQW 1312/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): Although no final decisions have been made in regard to the location of any sporting venue for the Games, an advertisement was placed in the Belfast Telegraph by Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) on behalf of the Stakeholder Group on Friday 2nd July 2010 seeking expressions of interest for venue owners wishing to host sporting events. The advertisement was also placed on the SNI website.

In addition, letters introducing the 2013 Games and the expression of interest process were sent to the Chief Executives of each District Council in Northern Ireland and the appropriate representative at each sport governing body that could potentially have a sport included in the Belfast 2013 Games.

SNI are currently reviewing the expression of interest returns to determine whether the venues/facilities meet the pre-determined facility specifications of the World Police and Fire Games Federation.

The selection criteria being used includes that priority will be given to venues that are nearest geographically to the Games Village. However, in exceptional circumstances where there is no suitable venue within Belfast for a particular sport or there is an exceptional venue outside Belfast, other venues will be considered.

The Games Village will be located in close proximity to Belfast City Centre.

Kennedy Kane McArthur

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what progress has been made on plans to commemorate the centenary of Kennedy Kane McArthur's Olympic marathon victory.

(AQW 1403/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I met with the Dervock and District Community Association (DDCA) on the 3rd August 2010. At that meeting I advised that they should engage with the Ulster Scots Agency regarding further research and with the Ulster Scots Community Network regarding publications.

I also suggested that DDCA should invite all the key stakeholders to a meeting at which they could discuss the Kennedy Kane Centenary and to collectively look at suitable funding options.

I am aware that Ballymoney District Council has recommended that Dervock be included in the Northern Ireland leg of the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay. However, the route for the Torch Relay is still under consideration and is unlikely to be finalised before the spring of 2012.

In addition DCAL officials have discussed with Deloitte, a lead 2012 partner, the possibility of them assisting DDCA in developing their plans.

I understand that Deloitte will be in contact with DDCA in the coming weeks.

Community Based Groups

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are currently available from his Department, or any of its arms-length bodies, to community-based groups for capital build for premises.
(AQW 1411/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The table below illustrates the grant funding currently available from my Department. These are provided through the Department's Arms Length Bodies to community-based groups for capital build for premises.

Project name	Summary	Budget Allocated	Date grant funding is available
Sport Matters – Community Capital Programme	A Programme prioritising schemes that demonstrate facility need within rural, semi-rural and urban settings which will increase participation in sport by those not previously engaged.	£1.5m	Programme launching 19 October 2010. For project spend in 2011/12.
ACNI Building Programme	This programme is open to applications from arts organisations to carry out feasibility studies for building projects.	Programme lies within the overall lottery budget of £4.3m – 100k available for feasibility studies.	This programme is only available until mid November

Ulster Camogie Council

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 1112/11, to outline the current status of the DARD Central Investigation Service investigation into the financial affairs of the Ulster Camogie Council.

(AQW 1416/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: DARD Central Investigation Service investigations into the financial affairs of the Ulster Camogie Council, carried out on behalf of the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure are completed.

DARD Central Investigation Service concluded that the evidence available was inadequate to prove fraud.

The Sport NI report which referenced the DARD CIS report was submitted to the NIAO via the Department.

Subsequently, the Comptroller and Auditor General provided a report on this matter to the PAC. This report is in the public domain.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1455/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Although my Department is in regular contact with corresponding departments in England, Scotland and Wales on a range of matters, it has not carried out any benchmarking exercises with them. It has, however, carried out an element of benchmarking between its arm's length bodies on the level of administration costs.

Ulster Camogie Council

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 1154/11, whether any independent scrutiny or investigation has been undertaken at the request or behest of his Department into the financial affairs of the Ulster Camogie Council; and when he expects to be in a position to report on these findings.

(AQW 1492/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: As a consequence of information provided by two unnamed sources to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), investigations were carried out by Sport NI and by the DARD Central Investigation Service. The DARD Central Investigation Service concluded that the evidence available was inadequate to prove fraud.

The Sport NI report which referenced the DARD CIS report was submitted to the NIAO via the Department.

Subsequently, the Comptroller and Auditor General provided a report on this matter to the PAC. This report is in the public domain.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) “screened out” as having no Equality Impact; and (b) “screened in” as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1547/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The table below details the number of policies screened by my Department and its associated bodies

	Total Screenings	Screened Out	Screened In
DCAL	11	11	-
Associated Bodies	97	92	5

Equality screening is carried out by staff as part of their normal duties and information on the costs involved is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

I trust you will find this information useful.

Ulster Camogie Council

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 1075/11, what action his Department has taken in respect of the review undertaken by the DARD Central Investigation Service into the financial affairs of the Ulster Camogie Council, as detailed in the NI Audit Office Report published on 7 July 2010.

(AQW 1623/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The DARD Central Investigation Service review, carried out on behalf of DCAL, concluded that the evidence available was not sufficient and reliable, to meet the standard of proof required for a successful criminal investigation and that such an investigation would not be commensurate with the potential sums lost, and therefore not in the public interest.

Therefore, no further actions were necessary.

Department of Education

Sure Start Programme

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education whether she has any plans to carry out an evaluation of the Sure Start programme.

(AQW 1098/11)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Tá sé beartaithe ag an Roinn Oideachais measúnú neamhspleách seachtrach a dhéanamh ar an Chlár Tús Cinnte. Tá obair faoi shiúl le hullmhú don phróiseas soláthair.

The Department of Education plans to undertake an independent external evaluation of the Sure Start Programme. Work is underway to prepare for the procurement process.

Harryville Primary School, Ballymena

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Education to detail the dates and nature of any inspections carried out at Harryville Primary School, Ballymena, since January 2007; and if there are any plans for future inspections of the school.

(AQW 1192/11)

Minister of Education: Rinneadh na cigireachtaí seo a leanas in Harryville Primary School agus/nó san Aonad Naíscoile ó mhí Eanáir 2007:

The following inspections have taken place in Harryville Primary School and/or Nursery Unit since January 2007:

- (1) The primary school and nursery unit had a focused inspection of English and ICT during the week commencing 8 October 2007.
- (2) The nursery unit had a Follow-Up Inspection on 1 June 2009.
- (3) The primary school had a Follow-Up Inspection on 30 November 2009.

The District Inspector last visited the school on 11 June 2010 to monitor progress on addressing the areas for improvement. The Education and Training Inspectorate will continue to monitor the school's progress. There are currently no further inspections scheduled to take place.

Essential School Maintenance

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Education whether she is prioritising essential school maintenance within her school capital budget to avoid more expensive repairs in the future.[R]

(AQW 1220/11)

Minister of Education: Is eol dom go maith an tábhacht a bhaineann lena chinntiú go gcothaítear mar is ceart eastát na scoileanna chun dearóiliú do-ghlactha na bhfoirgneamh a chosc, agus lena chinntiú go bhfuil timpeallacht foghlama atá oiriúnach don fheidhm ag ár ndaoine óga agus ag ár múinteoirí.

I am intensely conscious of the importance of ensuring that the schools' estate is appropriately maintained to prevent unacceptable deterioration of the buildings and to ensure that our young people and teachers have a learning environment that is kept fit for purpose.

Urgent maintenance of the schools estate that is required for Health and Safety, to prevent immediate closure of premises or to avoid serious deterioration of the fabric or services to buildings is normally addressed without any undue delay. However maintenance required for less urgent reasons has to be addressed on the basis of its priority and on the availability of finance.

To assist in the prioritisation of maintenance, the Education and Library Boards carry out condition surveys of the individual properties in the estate on a cyclic basis and the data from these surveys is stored on a database known as the Manhattan estate management system. The data is stored on Manhattan with priority ratings based on condition. From the stored data, those responsible for maintenance are able to ascertain the schools most in need and the areas within those schools that require attention.

In the last three years I have provided over £80m for school maintenance and in this year alone £31.9m has been allocated so far.

I am aware of the historic failure to invest sufficiently to address maintenance issues in the estate and hence I will continue to press the Executive for additional funding for schools' maintenance.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education how many apprentices have a placement within her Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1223/11)

Minister of Education: Níor cuireadh aon phrintísigh laistigh de mo Roinn nó d'aon eagraíochtaí neamhthuilleamaíocha sa bhliain 2010/11.

There have been no apprentices placed within my Department or any arms-length bodies in 2010/11.

Schools Health and Safety Standards

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the schools which failed to meet health and safety standards, following risk assessments, in each of the last two years; (ii) in which areas the standards were not met; and (iii) the steps being taken to address these failures.

(AQW 1329/11)

Minister of Education: Níl an t-eolas a d'iarr tú ar fáil. Is faoi fhoireann bhainistíochta gach scoile atá an fhreagracht as measúnuithe scoileanna ar an riosca don tsláinte agus don tsábháilteacht nó as tuairiscí cigireachta scoileanna. Ní bheidh eolas ag an Roinn agus/nó ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlann ar na saincheisteanna a d'eascair astu ach amháin má dhéantar, mar gheall ar an mheasúnú, iarratas ar chothabháil bhreise agus/nó iarratas go ndéanfar oibreacha mionchaitil. Cuireann an Roinn agus na Boird in ord tosaíochta aon obair atá riachtanach chun dul i ngleic le rioscaí don tsláinte agus don tsábháilteacht.

The information you have requested is not available. Responsibility for schools' health and safety risk assessments or inspection reports rests with each school's management team. The Department and/or the Education and Library Boards will only be aware of resultant issues if, as a result of the assessment, an application is made for either maintenance and/or minor capital works to be undertaken. Any work necessary to address unacceptable health and safety risks is prioritised by the Department and the Boards

Transport Policy

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education if and when a comprehensive review of her Department's transport policy will be carried out and when the results will be published.

(AQW 1330/11)

Minister of Education: Coinníonn an Roinn Oideachais agus na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlann soláthar iompair scoile agus beartas iompair scoile chun luach ar airgead agus úsáid éifeachtach na sócmhainní araon a chinntiú. Tá planáil scoile, tagarmharcáil, táscairí feidhmíochta, spriocanna feidhmíochta agus córas tairiscintí iomaíocha i measc na modhanna chun cuidiú leis na saincheisteanna seo agus chun iad a chinntiú.

School transport policy and provision are kept under review by the Department of Education and the Education & Library Boards to ensure both, value for money and the effective use of resources. School planning, benchmarking, performance indicators, performance targets and competitive tendering are some of the means used to inform and ensure these considerations.

Equality and All-Ireland Directorate

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the annual budget for the Equality and All-Ireland Directorate.

(AQW 1331/11)

Minister of Education: Is é an buiséad bliantúil reatha le haghaidh na Stiúrthóireachta um Chomhionannas agus na Stiúrthóireachta Uile-Éireann ná £1,530,000 i leith Caiteachas Ginearálta Riaracháin. Tá caiteachas tuartha tuarastail de £2,735,000 don bhliain 2010/11 ag an Stiúrthóireacht fosta.

The current annual budget for the Equality and All Ireland Directorate is £1,530,000 for General Administrative Expenditure. The Directorate also has forecast salary expenditure of £2,735,000 for 2010/11.

This covers the full range of functions set out in my answer to AQW 572/11 published in the Official Report on 8 October 2010.

Health and Safety Issues

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 525/11, to detail (i) the lack of clarity surrounding the definition of what constitutes health and safety work, as indicated by the Education and Library Boards; and (ii) what steps she is taking to ensure that this definition is understood.

(AQW 1340/11)

Minister of Education: De bhun AQW 525/11, eascraíonn an easpa soiléire ar cad is obair ar shláinte agus shábháilteacht ann as an réimse éagsúil leathan saincheisteanna a fholáíonn an téarma sláinte agus sábháilteacht agus féadfar a rá go mbaineann aon iarratas ar mhionobreacha le sláinte agus sábháilteacht, ach nuair a mheasann comhairleoirí gairmiúla na Roinne an t-iarratas, is minic a bhíonn sé ina shaincheist bhainistithe réadmhaoine nó ina iarratas ar riachtanas a spíonadh, agus ina iarratas ar dhul i ngleic le riachtanas, ag an scoil atá i gceist.

Pursuant to AQW 525/11, the lack of clarity as to what constitutes health and safety work arises because the term health and safety covers a wide and diverse range of issues and any minor works application can be purported to be health and safety related, yet often when the application is assessed by the Department's professional advisors it proves to be either a property management issue or a request to consider and address a need at the particular school.

Regardless of this, the degree of risk attached to each health and safety related application is assessed and responded to appropriately. The Department and the Education and Library Boards monitor the levels of risk on an ongoing basis and where an unacceptable risk is identified it is dealt with immediately.

The Department has been working with the Education and Library Boards to introduce additional fields on the estates database to capture more specific information on reported health and safety works and bring clarity to what constitutes health and safety works.

Maintenance of Schools in the North Antrim Area

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent on the maintenance of schools in the North Antrim area, in each of the last three years, broken down by sector.

(AQW 1341/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an caiteachas ar chothabháil scoileanna i limistéar Aontroim Thuaidh mionsonraithe sa tábla thíos:

The spend on maintenance of schools in the North Antrim area is detailed in the table below:

Sector	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Controlled	£542,679.98	£508,312.70	£645,868.29
Maintained and other maintained	£197,880.52	£208,753.75	£230,370.48
	£740,560.50	£717,066.45	£876,238.77

Figures for voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools are not readily available.

Papers Awaiting Clearance

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education how many papers, from her officials, are currently awaiting her clearance.

(AQW 1343/11)

Minister of Education: I ndáil le doiciméid a fuarthas ó fheidhmeannaigh roimh dheireadh mhí Mheán Fómhair 2010, tá 10 gcinn ag feitheamh le mo chead.

In relation to papers received from officials up to the end of September 2010, one is awaiting my clearance.

Ministerial Clearance of Papers

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the average number of days it takes to get Ministerial clearance of papers from officials before they are presented to the Education Committee.

(AQW 1354/11)

Minister of Education: Ó Mhí Eanáir 2010, glacadh trí lá, ar an mheán, chun doiciméid ó fheidhmeannaigh a cheadú sula bhfuil siad réidh le cur chuig an Choiste Oideachais.

From January 2010 to date it has taken an average of three days to clear papers from officials before they are ready to be sent to the Education Committee.

Vacant Teaching Posts

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Education how many vacant teaching posts currently exist in (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 1368/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas seo sna táblaí thíos.

The information is contained in the tables below.

(I) NUMBER OF VACANCIES IN THE 2009/10 ACADEMIC YEAR IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT 2 NOVEMBER 2009 1, 2

Type of Vacancy	Education and Library Board Area				
	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern
Full-Time Permanent	4	8	4	15	14
Full-Time Temporary ³	3	1	5	5	2
Part-Time Permanent	4	0	4	4	1
Part-Time Temporary ³	1	1	5	3	3

(II) NUMBER OF VACANCIES IN THE 2009/10 ACADEMIC YEAR IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT 2 NOVEMBER 2009 2

Source: Teacher Vacancy Survey

Type of Vacancy	Education and Library Board Area				
	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern
Full-Time Permanent	9	7	4	3	7
Full-Time Temporary ³	2	2	2	2	2
Part-Time Permanent	0	1	0	0	0
Part-Time Temporary ³	0	1	1	0	1

1. Includes preparatory departments of grammar schools.
2. Number of vacancies is for classroom teachers only.
3. Temporary vacancies include temporary positions of 1 year or more and temporary positions of less than 1 year.

Expected Level of Reading or Writing

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Education how many children left (i) primary school; and (ii) post-primary school without achieving the expected level of reading or writing in each of the last three years, broken down by (a) gender; and (b) Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 1371/11)

Minister of Education: Soláthraítear sna táblaí thíos eolas ar mheasúnuithe Eochairchéim 2 i mBéarla don earnáil bhunscoile agus i mBéarla GCSE don earnáil iarbhunscoile.

The tables below provide information on Key Stage Two assessments in English for the primary sector and GCSE English for the post-primary sector.

Progress in raising educational standards has been made however significant challenges remain, particularly to close the gap between the most and least disadvantaged. I have made it a priority to tackle underachievement and to promote equality and the raising of standards in literacy and numeracy in all our schools.

(I) NUMBER OF PRIMARY PUPILS NOT ACHIEVING THE EXPECTED LEVEL (LEVEL 4 OR ABOVE) IN ENGLISH IN KEY STAGE TWO ASSESSMENTS BY GENDER AND BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD 2007/08 TO 2009/10.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Boys	3,158	2,882	2,690
Girls	1,909	1,746	1,588
TOTAL	5,067	4,628	4,278
BELB	1,014	982	869
WELB	920	823	757
NEELB	1,177	998	1,003
SEELB	873	828	768
SELB	1,083	997	881

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Total	5,067	4,628	4,278

Source: Key Stage Assessments

(II) NUMBER OF POST PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT ACHIEVING GCSE ENGLISH A*-C BY GENDER AND BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD 2006/07 TO 2008/09.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Boys	5,415	5,099	4,643
Girls	3,336	3,037	2,942
TOTAL	8,751	8,136	7,585
BELB	1,549	1,318	1,147
WELB	1,739	1,513	1,411
NEELB	2,028	1,915	1,809
SEELB	1,617	1,577	1,450
SELB	1,818	1,813	1,768
Total	8,751	8,136	7,585

Source: School Leavers Survey

Retired Teachers

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of teachers who took early retirement from (i) primary school; and (ii) post-primary school in each of the last five years and are currently teaching part-time, broken down by gender.

(AQW 1373/11)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn na figiúirí i dTábla 1 líon na múinteoirí a chuaigh ar scor sna cúig scoilbhliana seo a chuaigh thart – 01/09/05 go 31/08/10. Léiríonn Tábla 2 líon na múinteoirí a chuaigh ar scor sna cúig bliana seo a chuaigh thart agus a athfhostaíodh sa bhliain airgeadais reatha seo i ról páirtaimseartha (i.e. i ról ar bith seachas ról buan). Tá múinteoirí a chuaigh ar scor ón tseirbhís pheiripitéatach agus ó scoileanna speisialta folaithe fosta.

Figures in Table 1 represent the number of teachers who retired in the last five school years - 01/09/05 to 31/08/10. Table 2 represents numbers of teachers who retired in any of the last five years but have been re-employed in this current financial year in a part-time capacity (i.e. in any capacity other than permanent). Included are teachers who retired from the peripatetic service and from special schools.

The Department, on a monthly basis, monitors and challenges instances where retired teachers have been re-employed.

TABLE 1 - EARLY RETIREES IN LAST 5 YEARS

		Primary	Post-primary	Special	Peripatetic
1/9/05-31/08/06	Male	42	151	6	3
	Female	203	123	12	29
1/9/06 -31/08/07	Male	43	153	5	1
	Female	191	137	9	4
1/9/07-31/08/08	Male	31	168	4	0
	Female	126	202	19	0
1/9/08-31/08/09	Male	24	78	1	1
	Female	83	114	8	1
1/9/09-31/08/10	Male	6	41	8	0
	Female	50	62	8	0

TABLE 2 – RETIRED TEACHERS RE-EMPLOYED IN 010/2011

	Primary	Post-primary	Special	Peripatetic
Male	3	25	2	0
Female	32	47	3	2

Newly Qualified Teachers

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of newly qualified teachers in each of the last three years; and (ii) of these how many are in (a) full-time; and (b) part-time teaching posts, broken down by (iii) gender; and (iv) Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 1376/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh mionsonraithe sa tábla faoi iamh.

The information requested is detailed in the attached table.

Graduates in Permanent Employment												
Year	All Graduates		Female						Male			
			BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB		
2006/07	807	Full-time	63	34	93	66	78	10	13	24	21	20
		Part-time	6	3	5	13	11	1	0	4	0	2
2007/08	805	Full-time	53	37	75	55	46	17	12	20	14	15
		Part-time	2	4	6	1	2	0	0	1	3	1
2008/09	735	Full-time	31	20	49	42	30	17	3	12	11	10
		Part-time	3	3	7	7	7	0	0	2	0	1

Pupils Living in Poverty

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education what steps her Department is taking to support and assist pupils who are living in poverty.

(AQW 1420/11)

Minister of Education: Tá roinnt beart i bhfeidhm ag mo Roinn chun tacú agus cúnamh le daltaí a mhaireann i mbochtanas. Déantar cuid díobh seo trí dheontais nó trí íocaíochtaí a théann díreach chun sochair don dalta nó don teaghlach, agus folaíonn siad Béilí Saora Scoile agus Liúntais Éadaí, rudaí atá ar fáil do theaghlaigh agus do dhaltaí nach bhfuil ioncam acu nó a bhfuil ioncam íseal acu. Soláthraíonn mo Roinn cistiú do scoileanna, fosta, chun cúnamh le riarachán Liúntas Cothabhála Oideachais. Is faoi réir DEL atá cistiú do na liúntais féin.

My Department has a number of measures in place to support and assist pupils who live in poverty. Some of these are in the form of grants or payments that benefit the pupil or family directly and include Free School Meals and Clothing Allowances which are available to families and pupils with no or low income. My Department's post-primary transfer policy includes a recommendation that schools use their admissions criteria to prioritise the admission of a fair number of children who are registered as being entitled to free school meals.

My Department also provides funding to schools to assist with the administration of Education Maintenance Allowances. Funding for the actual allowances falls to DEL.

Other measures are targeted at schools in areas of deprivation or children who suffer social disadvantage and include Extended Schools, Sure Start, and the Preschool Education Expansion Programme.

In addition there are measures in place to provide support to marginalised groups that often face poverty as well as barriers to education. These include Newcomers, Traveller and Roma children, School Age Mothers and Looked After Children. Funding is also provided to enable special provision to be put in place to remove or diminish the barriers to achievement which young people with special educational needs, some of whom may live in poverty, may face.

Finally my Department has a range of policies aimed at ensuring every child has the opportunity to fulfill their potential including the school improvement policy, the revised curriculum, Entitlement Framework and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. My Department is also currently consulting on a draft Early Years (0 – 6) Strategy.

My Department is also working closely with OFMDFM and other stakeholders in relation to the development of the Child Poverty Strategy.'

Children from Poorer Backgrounds

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of whether children from poorer backgrounds are more likely to under-perform at school; and what action her Department is taking to address this issue.

(AQW 1422/11)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn fianaise ceangal do-bhuanaithe idir tearcghnóthachtáil oideachais agus míbhuntáiste socheacnamaíoch. Mar shampla, ba dhócha faoi dhó go mbainfeadh fágálaigh scoile ó na cúlraí is flúirse amach an tagarmharc tábhachtach de 5+ GCSE (nó a chomhionann), lena n-áirítear grád A*-C i mBéarla agus i Mata, i gcomparáid leo siúd ó na cúlraí is mó faoi mhíbhuntáiste, mar a thomhastar trí Theidlíocht le haghaidh Béilí Saora Scoile (63.6% i gcomparáid le 29.7% sa bhliain 2008/09).

Evidence clearly shows an untenable link between educational underachievement and socio-economic disadvantage. For example, school leavers from the most affluent backgrounds were twice as likely to achieve the important benchmark of 5+ GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths at grades A*-C, compared to those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds as measured by Free School Meal Entitlement (63.6% compared to 29.7% in 2008/09).

The challenge may be greater for those schools serving the most disadvantaged communities, or where the value placed on education is not as high as it might be. However, it is not insurmountable, and we already have schools in this situation achieving very good outcomes for their young people. We must not allow disadvantage, poverty of aspiration, or any other barrier to learning to stand in the way of pupils achieving to their full potential at each stage in their education.

Since becoming Education Minister, I have made it a priority to tackle underachievement wherever it exists and to promote equality and the raising of standards for all our young people. I have therefore introduced a range of interconnected policies to ensure that every child can fulfil her or his potential. Policies include my school improvement policy, ending state sponsored testing at the age of 10 or 11, the revised curriculum and entitlement framework, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the review of special educational needs and inclusion, the early years strategy, the Extended and Full Service Schools programmes, support for Newcomer and Traveller Children and the Achieving Belfast and Derry programmes. My work through the North-South Ministerial Council also has a focus on tackling underachievement, especially among the most disadvantaged, as this is an area of co-operation and concern.

Free School Meals

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage of children who were (i) entitled; and (ii) not entitled, to free school meals who achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C in (a) 2006; (b) 2007; (c) 2008; (d) 2009; and (e) 2010.

(AQW 1423/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an freagra sa tábla thíos. Baineadh an t-eolas ó Shuirbhé na bhFágálach Scoile agus léiríonn sé an staid le linn na cúig bliana seo a chuaigh thart. Níl sonraí ar fáil go fóill don bhliain acadúil 2010.

The answer is contained in the table below. The data have been extracted from the School Leavers Survey and shows the position over the past five years. Data is currently not yet available for the 2010 academic year.

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ACHIEVING AT LEAST 5 GCSES A*-C (INC. EQUIVALENTS) BY FREE SCHOOL MEAL ENTITLEMENT 2005 TO 2009

Academic Year	Entitled to Free School Meals	Not Entitled to Free School Meals
2005	35.6	70.3
2006	37.6	70.2
2007	37.9	70.4
2008	39.7	71.8
2009	42.9	75.0

Source: School Leavers Survey

Year 8 at Secondary Schools in the North Antrim Area

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils who enrolled in Year 8 at each secondary school in the North Antrim area, in each of the last three years; and the percentage of these children who were entitled to free school meals.

(AQW 1424/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sa tábla thíos.

The information requested is contained in the table below.

POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY – YEAR 8 ENROLMENTS AND ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS – 2007/08 – 2009/10

School name	Year 8 enrolment			% Year 8 pupils entitled to free school meals		
	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10
Ballee Community High School	57	77	58	24.6	35.1	53.5
Ballycastle High School	62	62	60	27.4	16.1	18.3
Ballymena Academy	177	178	176	*	*	2.8
Ballymoney High School	136	143	112	27.2	24.5	26.8
Cambridge House Grammar School	163	151	153	4.9	4.0	5.2
Cross and Passion College	108	139	132	19.4	18.0	12.1
Cullybackey High School	134	128	127	14.2	14.1	16.5
Dalriada School	127	125	129	*	4.8	7.0
Dunclug College	88	112	111	22.7	19.6	26.1
Dunluce School	99	116	88	20.2	24.1	22.7
Our Lady of Lourdes High School	43	40	50	20.9	32.5	22.0
Slemish College	127	128	125	16.5	10.2	13.6
St Louis GS	134	144	142	3.7	4.2	6.3
St Patrick's College	63	92	75	25.4	21.7	26.7

Source: School census

Note:

1 The schools above have been selected using the most recent constituency boundaries.

* refers to fewer than 5 pupils.

Faith-based Schools

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Education whether any negative evidence has been gathered by the Education and Training Inspectorate in relation to the education provided by faith-based schools in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1453/11)

Minister of Education: Faoi láthair, déanann an Chigireacht Oideachais agus Oiliúna cigireacht ar gach scoil faoi chothabháil stáit ar bhonn timthriall seacht mbliana nach ndéantar idirdhealú maidir le cineál bainistíochta scoile ann. Tá gach tuairisc chigireachta do na trí bliana seo a chuaigh thart ar fáil ag www.etini.gov.uk.

Currently, the Education and Training Inspectorate inspects all

grant-maintained schools on the basis of a seven-year cycle, within which there is no distinction made with regard to school management type. All inspection reports for the last three-years are available at www.etini.gov.uk.

State-funded Pre-school Provision

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 987/11, what legal requirement is placed upon education authorities to provide state-funded pre-school provision for children who live outside Northern Ireland at the time of application.

(AQW 1470/11)

Minister of Education: I ndáil le soláthar réamhscoile, éilíonn Airteagal 32(4) den Ord Oideachais (TÉ) 1998 go dtugtar tosaíocht do pháistí a bhfuil cónaí orthu i dtuaisceart na hÉireann roimh iarratasóirí neamhchónaitheacha. Ní spíonfar a leithéid d'iarratas ach amháin nuair atá áiteanna fós le fáil laistigh den líon formheasta rollaithe tar éis gach iarratasóir a bhfuil cónaí orthu sa tuaisceart a bheith glactha leo.

In respect of pre-school provision, Article 32(4) of the Education (NI) Order 1998 requires priority to be given to all children resident in the north of Ireland before any non-resident applicants. Such applications will only be considered where places remain available within the approved enrolment number after all northern resident applicants have been admitted.

I intend to bring forward proposals to delete this Article in relation to pre-school admissions and similar Articles in legislation relating to the primary and post-primary sectors.

The main reason I wish this law to be amended is because it is at odds with the reality of the way people in border areas live and access services. The residency priority is not in keeping with the developing concepts of EU citizenship and freedom of movement across borders.

Pre-school Places

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 987/11, how many children did not receive a funded pre-school place after the additional £1.3 million was provided, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1471/11)

Minister of Education: Mionsonraítear sa tábla thíos líon na bpáistí ina mbliain dheireanach réamhscoile nach raibh áit acu ag deireadh an phróisis um iontrálacha réamhscoile ar 30 Aibreán 2010 i ngach ceann de limistéir na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlann (BOL). Níl an t-eolas agus é miondealaithe de réir toghcheantair ar fáil go héasca.

The table below details the number of children in their final pre-school year who were unplaced at the end of the pre-school admissions process on 30 April 2010 in each of the Education and Library Board (ELB) areas. This information is not readily available broken down by constituency.

	No. of children unplaced
BELB	246
WELB	165
NEELB	184
SEELB	308
SELB	299
Total	1202

On 20 May I announced additional funding of up to £1.3 million, to provide up to 1,200 more pre-school places in the voluntary/private sector, in order to ensure that, where possible, every child would be offered a funded pre-school place. The Pre-School Education Advisory Groups in each of the Education and Library Board areas allocated additional places to those settings in their area which had spare capacity and unplaced children seeking a funded pre-school place. However as places are claimed monthly in arrears the actual uptake of these places will not be available until the September claims are received, collated and verified by each ELB.

I will write to the member with the information he has requested as soon as it becomes available.

GCSEs

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education (i) how many children left Year 12 without achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C in each of the last five years, broken down by each Education and Library Board; and (ii) the percentage this represents for each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 1477/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sa tábla thíos:

The information requested is in the table below:

Board Area	Year	Number of year 12 pupils not achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C	Number of pupils in year 12	Percentage of year 12 pupils not achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C
BELB	2008/09	1,100	4,491	24.5
	2007/08	1,472	4,765	30.9
	2006/07	1,557	4,770	32.6
	2005/06	1,684	4,780	35.2
	2004/05	1,811	4,877	37.1
WELB	2008/09	1,213	4,154	29.2
	2007/08	1,397	4,360	32.0
	2006/07	1,602	4,484	35.7
	2005/06	1,703	4,561	37.3
	2004/05	1,812	4,587	39.5
NEELB	2008/09	1,478	5,189	28.5
	2007/08	1,733	5,345	32.4
	2006/07	1,984	5,445	36.4
	2005/06	2,053	5,455	37.6
	2004/05	2,221	5,650	39.3

Board Area	Year	Number of year 12 pupils not achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C	Number of pupils in year 12	Percentage of year 12 pupils not achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C
SEELB	2008/09	1,435	4,131	34.7
	2007/08	1,550	4,354	35.6
	2006/07	1,766	4,420	40.0
	2005/06	1,777	4,388	40.5
	2004/05	1,860	4,430	42.0
SELB	2008/09	1,443	5,208	27.7
	2007/08	1,614	5,514	29.3
	2006/07	1,865	5,584	33.4
	2005/06	1,949	5,570	35.0
	2004/05	2,046	5,619	36.4

Data excludes special and independent schools, and pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

Data includes equivalent qualifications. The information presented relates to the schools in the respective Board areas.

Source: Summary of Annual Examination Results.

Press Office

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education how many staff currently work in her Department's Press Office; and to detail the running costs of the Press Office in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1488/11)

Minister of Education: Tá Preasoifig na Roinne Oideachais ina cuid den Fhoireann Cumarsáide, rud a fholaíonn 14 fhoireann, lena n-áirítear 5 phreasfheidhmeannach agus 4 fhoireann dearaidh ghrafaigh.

The Department of Education's Press Office is part of the Communications Team which comprises a total of 14 staff, including 5 press officers, 5 administrative staff and 4 graphic design staff. In addition to press and public relations work the Communications Team has responsibility for; the Departmental website and intranet, updating the NI Direct website, design and print of documents, preparation of ministerial briefings relating to school visits and preparation of staff briefing papers. Four of the 5 press officers would be exclusively engaged in traditional press office functions and their salary costs are detailed below. It is not possible to disaggregate other running costs.

Gross salary details include gross pay received, and corresponding employer's national insurance contributions and superannuation costs.

2009/10	£146,437
2008/09	£153,006
2007/08	£142,704

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Education how much her Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1512/11)

Minister of Education: Is soláthraithe sa tábla thíos atá mionsonraí ar chaiteachas a leag an Roinn Oideachais amach mar chostais dlí i ngach ceann de na cúig bliana seo a chuaigh thart ó 2005-06 go 2009-10. Níl aon ghníomhaíochtaí ag an Roinn.

Details of expenditure that the Department of Education has coded to legal services in each of the last five years from 2005-06 to 2009-10 are provided in the table below. The Department does not have any agencies.

The figures in the table below include both legal fees and compensation costs.

	£
2005-06	(82,196.81)
2006-07	915.47
2007-08	1,016,824.72
2008-09	2,155,542.99
2009-10	39,761.29

In 2005-06 a number of cases were withdrawn and the associated accounting provision reversed, resulting in an overall negative cost.

Within the expenditure shown in the table payments of legal fees were made to the following organisations:

Department of Finance and Personnel/Departmental Solicitor's Office;

- Mr B Flanagan BL;
- Mr P Coll BL;
- Mr J O'Hara QC;
- Addleshaw Goddard LLP;
- Mr A Sands BL;
- Mr B McCluskey QC;
- EC Harris and Partners;
- Mr M Wolfe;
- Rowsell Wright Limited;
- Caldwell and Robinson Solicitors;
- The Children's Law Centre;
- Crown Solicitor's Office;
- Desmond J Doherty and Co Solicitors;
- Mr E McArdle;
- Kelly and Corr Solicitors;
- Mr P Maguire; and
- N I Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee.

Cost of Substitution Teacher Cover

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last three years, to detail the cost of substitution teacher cover for (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools, broken down by sector and Education and Library Board.

(AQW 1540/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh mionsonraithe sna táblaí faoi iamh.

The information requested is detailed in the attached tables.

PRIMARY

Area	Sector	06/07 Cost	07/08 Cost	08/09 Cost
Belfast	Maintained	£2,174,003.92	£2,669,246.70	£2,987,615.60
	ELB Controlled	£1,987,941.70	£2,307,623.04	£2,697,670.65
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£74,943.27	£69,081.11	£82,937.14
	Total	£4,236,888.89	£5,045,950.85	£5,768,223.39
North-Eastern	Maintained	£2,105,684.08	£2,368,313.38	£2,730,932.23
	ELB Controlled	£4,087,918.32	£4,420,283.97	£4,895,235.83
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£201,061.65	£274,519.04	£301,198.23
	Total	£6,394,664.05	£7,063,116.39	£7,927,366.29
South-Eastern	Maintained	£1,684,321.83	£2,220,565.22	£2,451,983.96
	ELB Controlled	£3,598,384.74	£4,067,209.29	£5,081,126.94
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£158,474.86	£175,791.38	£210,720.58
	Total	£5,441,181.43	£6,463,565.89	£7,743,831.48
Southern	Maintained	£4,199,024.35	£4,778,862.18	£5,503,021.91
	ELB Controlled	£2,660,941.76	£2,916,460.26	£2,988,554.84
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£191,057.63	£179,546.58	£224,748.05
	Total	£7,051,023.74	£7,874,869.02	£8,716,324.80
Western	Maintained	£3,240,487.91	£3,856,740.84	£4,400,655.45
	ELB Controlled	£1,823,456.08	£1,813,502.59	£1,913,444.49
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£149,277.12	£123,633.36	£108,479.67
	Total	£5,213,221.11	£5,793,876.79	£6,422,579.61
	Grand Total	£28,336,979.22	£32,241,378.94	£36,578,325.57

POST PRIMARY

Area	Sector	06/07 Cost	07/08 Cost	08/09 Cost
Belfast	Maintained	£1,527,494.17	£1,706,752.73	£1,851,207.29
	ELB Controlled	£1,247,521.66	£1,680,260.34	£1,611,677.56
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£258,747.52	£268,878.97	£288,251.72
	Total	£3,033,763.35	£3,655,892.04	£3,751,136.57
North-Eastern	Maintained	£1,101,222.76	£1,216,645.09	£1,417,381.26
	ELB Controlled	£2,849,358.83	£2,962,656.62	£3,159,652.78
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£287,402.79	£344,238.82	£369,929.69
	Total	£4,237,984.38	£4,523,540.53	£4,946,963.73
South-Eastern	Maintained	£987,606.04	£943,397.30	£1,191,795.86
	ELB Controlled	£2,131,271.69	£2,399,230.66	£2,645,070.97
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£280,627.51	£387,063.71	£572,286.65
	Total	£3,399,505.24	£3,729,691.67	£4,409,153.48
Southern	Maintained	£2,187,424.12	£2,479,596.86	£2,690,709.20
	ELB Controlled	£1,761,487.61	£1,899,890.82	£2,207,472.97
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£318,911.74	£304,669.95	£221,786.18
	Total	£4,267,823.47	£4,684,157.63	£5,119,968.35
Western	Maintained	£1,977,756.07	£2,188,916.00	£2,486,764.61
	ELB Controlled	£1,244,564.69	£1,176,393.33	£1,330,049.41
	Grant Maintained Integrated	£329,194.46	£360,492.14	£373,761.01
	Total	£3,551,515.22	£3,725,801.47	£4,190,575.03
	Grand Total	£18,490,591.66	£20,319,083.34	£22,417,797.16

Formal Intervention Programme

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) any additional resources provided by her Department to each school as a result of an inspection by her Department and a subsequent Formal Intervention programme; (ii) what criteria is used to determine the level of additional finance; and (iii) what procedures are in place to monitor and account for how this additional finance is used.

(AQW 1546/11)

Minister of Education: Níor sholáthair an Roinn aon chistiú breise díreach do scoileanna atá sa Phróiseas Idirghabhála Foirmiúla (PIF). Cinntíonn an Roinn, áfach, go bhfaigheann gach scoil sa PIF clár tacaíochta óna Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlann, atá ag obair leis an CCMS, atá dírithe ar dhul i ngleic le réimsí ar leith a sainaithníodh le haghaidh feabhsúcháin sa tuairisc chigireachta. Faoi láthair, soláthraítear an tacaíocht seo ó na sócmhainní atá ar fáil cheana féin do scoileanna agus do Bhoird, rudaí a sholáthraítear chun a chinntiú go bhfaigheann daltaí an t-oideachas ardchaighdeán a bhfuil siad ina theideal.

The Department has not provided any additional funding directly to schools in the Formal Intervention Process (FIP). However, the Department does ensure that each of the schools in the FIP receives a programme of focused support from its Education & Library Board, working where appropriate with CCMS, tailored to address the specific areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. That support is currently provided from within the resources already available to schools and Boards, which are provided to ensure that pupils receive the high quality education to which they are entitled. In 2009/10, the Department allocated £7.2m to the Boards in support of school improvement and in 2010/11, expects to allocate a similar level of funding.

School Inspections

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Education where school inspections identified leadership as 'unsatisfactory', what recommendations in relation to the composition of the Board of Governors of each school was made, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1549/11)

Minister of Education: Rinne an Chigireacht Oideachais agus Oiliúna (COO) moladh maidir le ballraíocht Bhord na nGobharnóirí ar dhá scoil, ceann amháin sa bhliain airgeadais 2007/08 agus an ceann eile sa bhliain airgeadais 2009/10, inar chinn sí go raibh an cheannaireacht míshásúil.

The Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI) made a recommendation in relation to the composition of the Boards of Governors of two schools where it found leadership to be unsatisfactory, one in the 2007/08 financial year and one in the 2009/10 financial year. In both cases, ETI recommended that, because the school was not providing an acceptable standard of education, due primarily to shortcomings in the management of the school, the Department of Education should exercise its power under Article 14 of the 1998 Education Order to appoint additional voting members to the Board of Governors, with appropriate experience and expertise, to assist the Governors in addressing the issues raised in the inspection report. The Department acted upon this recommendation in both cases.

Joint Study on North-South Co-operation in Education

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Joint Study on North-South Co-operation in Education.

(AQW 1634/11)

Minister of Education: Tá mo Roinn agus an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ag cíoradh, faoi láthair, staidreamh scóipe a chuir an Lárionad um Staidéar Trasteorann agus an Cuibhreannas Malartaithe Thuaidh Theas i gcrích, ar chomhoibriú Thuaidh/Theas thar na 5 bliana seo a chuaigh thart. Tá siad ag obair fosta ar chomhoibriú reatha leanúnach agus ar chomhoibriú féideartha sa toadhcaí a shainaithe i réimsí leasa choitinn. Tá an tuairisc, rud a fholáíonn plean gníomhaíochta, le bheith leis an bheirt Airí faoin Earrach 2011.

My Department and the Department for Education and Skills are currently considering the scoping study completed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the North South Exchange Consortium, on North/South collaboration over the past 5 years. They are also working on identifying current joint ongoing and potential future cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The report, including a costed 2-3 year action plan, is due with both Ministers by Spring 2011.

Department for Employment and Learning

Defending Litigation Cases

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what the legal costs were to his Department of defending litigation cases in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1165/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The legal cost for the Department of Employment and Learning of defending litigation cases in each of the last three years was as follows:

Financial Year	Cost
2007 / 2008	£16,393.53
2008 / 2009	£1,068
2009 /2010	£nil

Overseas Students

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of overseas students who completed university courses in Northern Ireland; and (ii) the total fees charged to overseas students, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1209/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The table below details (i) the number of overseas students who completed university courses in Northern Ireland; and (ii) the total fees charged to overseas students, in each of the last five years.

Year	(i) Number of overseas students who completed courses in Northern Ireland	(ii) Total fees charged to overseas students £million
2005/06	700	8.046
2006/07	852	8.697
2007/08	777	9.504
2008/09	769	10.99
2009/10	698	11.412

Student Fees

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the proposed removal of the cap on student fees in England.

(AQW 1210/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The findings of the Browne Review of higher education and student support in England were published on 12 October. Lord Browne's report includes a raft of proposals which have the potential to fundamentally change the higher education system, one of which is the proposal to remove the existing cap on tuition fees.

As I stated in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 October 2010, I will be carefully considering the implications of the Browne and Stuart reviews particularly in light of the importance of maintaining and further enhancing Northern Ireland's widening participation record and the outcome of the Spending Review, before launching a public consultation on these issues.

University Fees

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what bursaries are available to assist young people from socially-deprived areas to meet the cost of university fees.

(AQW 1211/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Higher education providers wishing to charge up to a maximum of £3,290 tuition fees in the 2010/11 academic year are required to have Approved Access Agreements in place. These Agreements must also include details of financial support for less well off students. Those providers who wish to charge the maximum tuition fee for a course will have to provide at least £329 to students on those courses who are receiving the full maintenance grant support or special support grant. Some providers are giving substantially more than £329 and some are also giving bursaries to students eligible for part of these grants.

Southern Regional College: Lonsdale Street Campus

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQO 259/11, whether he has bid for or secured funding to refurbish the Lonsdale Street Campus of the Southern Regional College, Armagh; and when he expects this work to commence.

(AQW 1255/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Bids have been made in Budget 2010 and to the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (version 3) to secure funding for a replacement campus at the Lonsdale Street Campus of the Southern Regional College in Armagh. Until the outcome of Budget 2010 is known no date can be set for work to commence.

Access to University Education for People with a Disability

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he intends to ensure that people with a disability maintain access to university education despite budgetary restraints on his Department.

(AQW 1262/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department remains committed to widening participation in higher education by students from groups who are currently underrepresented, in particular students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The implementation of the new Widening Participation Strategy will be a key element in ensuring that university education will continue to be accessible and affordable to people from all backgrounds.

My Department funds Disabled Student's Allowances which help students with the extra costs they have from studying their course that directly results from a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. The allowance does not depend on the student's, or their family's, income and does not have to be repaid.

In addition, my Department funds a Register of Support Providers in each of the two Northern Ireland universities. These are registers of professional and non-professional support providers who are recruited and trained to assist students with disabilities. Support from the register is available to all disabled students in the universities, university colleges, and Further Education Colleges. In academic year 2009/10 my Department provided funding of almost £210,000 to cover the administration costs of assessing students' support needs and "matching" the students with support providers.

The universities and university colleges also receive a widening access premium to assist with additional costs of students with disabilities. In academic year 2009/10 these institutions were funded £261,586 to provide specialist equipment and/or specific support for such students. The level of widening access premium allocated to the higher education institution is based on the number of its full-time undergraduate students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance.

Foreign Nationals in Further and Higher Education

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number and proportion of foreign nationals currently studying at (i) Queen's University; (ii) the University of Ulster; and (iii) Further Education Colleges.

(AQW 1335/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As there are various definitions of 'Foreign Nationals' and limited coverage within the NI Education Sector data, 'Country of Domicile' has been used in this instance as a valid proxy. The number and percentage of enrolments by domicile at Queen's University, University of Ulster and Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges in 2008/09 are detailed in the table below:

Domicile	The Queen's University of Belfast		University of Ulster		Further Education Colleges	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
NI	19980	87.6	19515	84.3	137363	96.4
GB	655	2.9	645	2.8	794	0.6
ROI	930	4.1	2250	9.7	3092	2.2
Other EU	270	1.2	170	0.7	1001	0.7
Non EU	975	4.3	575	2.5	236	0.2

Sources: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Further Education Statistical Record (FESR).

Notes:

1. Figures for The Queen's University of Belfast and University of Ulster have been rounded to the nearest 5.
2. The latest available full-year data are for 2008/09.
3. The FE data relates to Professional and Technical provision.

Post-graduate Student Finances

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the funding opportunities and the access to low-cost loans currently available to post-graduate students.

(AQW 1346/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Support for postgraduate students, many of whom have already had the benefit of my Department's student support for their primary degree, has always been discretionary and subject to change to reflect wider government priorities.

Each year my Department, through its Postgraduate Awards scheme, makes available student support funding to Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster for research and certain approved courses of full-time study leading to higher degrees (Masters and PhDs). The universities are responsible for administering the postgraduate awards scheme and select, by competition, the students to fill these awards within the limits of funding available.

There is no Departmental budget to support Northern Ireland students who seek to undertake postgraduate study in universities in Great Britain or beyond. Responsibility for funding such students, including those from Northern Ireland, undertaking postgraduate courses at higher education institutions in Great Britain rests with the Research Councils. My Department reciprocates by funding students from Great Britain attending similar courses at Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

There is no Departmental funding available to support Northern Ireland domiciled students undertaking part-time postgraduate study.

An alternative source of funding that full-time and part-time postgraduate students may be able to avail of is a Professional and Career Development loan. A Professional and Career Development loan is a bank loan which is designed to help people pay for work-related learning to help gain experience, training and qualifications to improve job skills or launch a new career. Like any bank loan, the money borrowed must be repaid but, with a Professional and Career Development loan, the interest is paid on the loan while a student is learning and for up to one month afterwards. A learner can borrow anything between £300 and £10,000 to help fund up to two years of learning (or up to three years if the course includes one year of relevant practical work experience).

Full-time and part-time postgraduate students may also be able to source funding through the Educational Grants Advisory Service which is an independent advice agency that provides information of sources of charitable educational funding for further and higher education.

Full-time and part-time postgraduate students who are in financial hardship or are contemplating leaving their course because of financial problems may be able to seek assistance from their university's Support Funds.

Post-graduate Places

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many postgraduate places remained unfilled at (i) Queen's University; and (ii) the University of Ulster, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 1353/11)**

Minister for Employment and Learning: As my Department does not hold information on this issue, the information below has been provided by the universities.

As there are no quotas in place in relation to postgraduate student numbers, there were no unfilled places at either university in the past five years.

Post-graduate Student Finances

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the current funding opportunities available for part-time postgraduate students to cover fees and living costs; and (ii) any private initiatives available for part-time postgraduate students who are in financial difficulty. **(AQW 1356/11)**

Minister for Employment and Learning: Support for postgraduate students, many of whom have already had the benefit of my Department's student support for their primary degree, has always been discretionary and subject to change to reflect wider government priorities.

Each year my Department, through its Postgraduate Awards scheme, makes available student support funding to Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster for research and certain approved courses of full-time study leading to higher degrees (Masters and PhDs). The universities are responsible for administering the postgraduate awards scheme and select, by competition, the students to fill these awards within the limits of funding available.

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Full-time and part-time postgraduate students who are in financial hardship or are contemplating leaving their course because of financial problems may be able to seek assistance from their university's Support Funds.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1433/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Work placements are available in the public sector under the Department's Programme Led Apprenticeship (PLA) programme. My Department currently has eight such placements available for 2010/11, of which training suppliers are aware and are seeking to fill.

College Lecturers

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what discussions took place between his Department, Further Education Colleges and Trade Unions which represent college lecturers in reaching agreement on Premature Retirement Compensation; and why his Department is minded to accept a proposal which could be detrimental to college lecturers in comparison to other areas of the education sector.

(AQW 1519/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department's only involvement in this matter has been to consistently encourage the six College employers to adopt a common 'sector wide' approach for the purpose of implementing severance payments for Lecturers. This culminated in the College employers submitting a 'sector wide' proposal to the Department on 17th September 2010. My Department provided clarification as requested, that the 'sector wide' proposal is within the parameters of the Teachers' Premature Retirement Scheme.

This response also advised College employers that any proposal remains subject to discussion with the recognised Trade Unions, using the established negotiating mechanisms.

Further and Higher Education Facilities

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) what further and higher education facilities his Department has provided; and (ii) how much investment he has allocated to the promotion of education and sustainable employment, in the South Antrim constituency, since taking office.

(AQW 1580/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The further/higher education facility in the South Antrim constituency is the Antrim campus of the Northern Regional College (NRC). No additional facilities have been provided since a refurbishment in 1983. New £10m facilities have recently been delivered at NRC's Newtownabbey campus and bids have been made to the CSR for further NRC capital funding – both will benefit South Antrim constituents.

The block grant allocation to the Further Education Sector for the 2010/11 academic year is £147 million, an increase of £2m on the previous academic year. Funding is allocated in line with Departmental priorities to each College and cannot be broken down to constituency level.

Under the Department's Bridge to Employment Programme, funding amounting to £63,075.64 has been provided to help 60 unemployed people gain sustainable employment in the South Antrim constituency since 2007.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

The Milk Cup and Foyle Cup

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the total running costs; and (ii) the level of funding allocated to (a) the Milk Cup; and (b) the Foyle Cup, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1201/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): The total running costs and the level of funding allocated to The Milk Cup in each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Total Running Costs	Level of funding allocated	Source
2006/07	Information not available from DCAL	£35,000	NI Events Company Ltd
		£15,000	Sport NI
2007/08	Information not available from DCAL	£25,000	NI Events Company Ltd
		£15,000	Sport NI
2008/09	£438,900	£50,000	DCAL
2009/10	£458,723	£59,678	DCAL
2010/11	£431,769	£40,000	DCAL
Total	£1,329,392	£239,678	

The total running costs and the level of funding allocated to The Foyle Cup in each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Total Running Costs	Level of funding allocated	Source
2006/07	£136,517	£60,047	NI Events Company Ltd
2007/08	£144,750	£44,712	NI Events Company Ltd
2008/09	£123,000	£50,000	DCAL
2009/10	£132,293	£50,000	DCAL
2010/11	£126,600	£40,000	DCAL
Total	£663,160	£244,759	

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department or Invest NI has discussed the potential for burning lignite or other non-poultry litter material at the proposed Rose Energy incinerator at Glenavy.

(AQW 1319/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Rose Energy project is the subject of an ongoing due diligence process and technical appraisals have indicated that there is potential for the power station to utilise waste wood as a supplementary fuel source.

Invest NI has not discussed the use of lignite as an alternative fuel for the Rose Energy incinerator.

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the proposed Invest NI capital construction funding for the proposed Rose Energy incinerator at Glenavy will be granted with conditions attached to prevent co-firing the incineration of poultry litter with (i) lignite; (ii) municipal waste; and (iii) hazardous waste.

(AQW 1322/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI continues to evaluate this project and the due diligence process is at an advanced stage. The outcome of this will determine if and to what extent an offer of financial support is made.

The Rose Energy proposal is for the development of a biomass fuelled power plant that will be fuelled by poultry bedding and meat and bone meal.

The conditions in the question are more relevant to the planning approval process. Any changes to the materials to be incinerated are a matter for the environment or planning agencies.

Capital Funding for Construction from Invest NI

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of whether an incinerator, capable of burning waste, should receive capital funding for construction from Invest NI if it has no proven means of producing electricity through a connection to the grid; and (ii) whether (a) her Department; or (b) Invest NI intends to grant this funding without planning approval for the electricity connection to the grid.

(AQW 1323/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI has a legislative responsibility to act in accordance with the Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982. The decision on provision of funding for any project, including an incinerator capable of burning waste, depends on its satisfying viability, efficiency and additionality criteria.

Invest NI's evaluation of a project would address these issues and identify relevant factors, such as connection to the grid, in reaching conclusions on the merits of a specific project.

Lough Neagh Tourism

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department spent on promoting tourism in Lough Neagh between January 2005 and October 2010.

(AQW 1357/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has spent in excess of £31 million on Marketing, Advertising & Promotion and Publications in the last five years. This expenditure is not attributable to specific constituencies, regions or areas.

Rose Energy Incinerator

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she can confirm that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board objected to Rose Energy's planning application for an incinerator at Glenavy; and (ii) to outline what concerns the Board raised in relation to the planning application and the potential impact it may have on tourism-related business and commerce in the Lough Neagh area.

(AQW 1360/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: On 2 February 2009 NITB responded to Planning Service on Planning Application S/2008/0630/F - the proposal to develop a biomass fuelled powerplant near Glenavy.

NITB pointed out that it did not hold local level detailed information on the potential impact of the project on tourism. A number of strategic priorities provide context for the development of tourism in the Lough Neagh area.

In its response NITB identified a range of issues related to the proposal which fall outside NITB's competence to judge.

Investment

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the investment by her Department in green economy jobs and businesses in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1365/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI has invested a total of £7 million in grant in green economy businesses in the Upper Bann constituency over the periods 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 including £0.56 million of support for R&D/technology transfer.

- In 2008 Invest NI provided £6.5m of support to Kingspan Renewables, leveraging an additional investment of over £40m with expected creation of 163 jobs.
- In 2009 Vector Environmental Services Ltd, received assistance of £175k from Invest NI to enhance capabilities and create an anticipated 8 jobs.
- During 2009/2010 CMS Global received £28.5k support under Invest NI's Growth Accelerator Programme, creating an anticipated 2 new jobs this financial year.

The funding of £0.56 million for R&D/technology transfer projects in the constituency included:

- 2008/2009 – Two R&D projects - total Grant £226,318 towards total project costs of £546,938.
- 2009/2010 - One R&D project – total Grant £20,878 towards total project costs of £32,120.
- 2010/2011 – Two R&D projects – total Grant £283,886 towards total project costs of £1,388,780
- 2010/2011 - One Knowledge Transfer Programme project - total Grant £62,312 of which Invest NI's contribution was £31,156.

Invest NI-funded programmes have also identified and supported the implementation of resource efficiency measures in businesses in the Upper Bann constituency over the period in question.

A total of £2.26 million of interest free loan was offered to 37 projects costing £3.62 million and which will realise almost £1 million per annum in energy savings.

- During the last 3 years Carbon Trust interest-free energy loans have been provided:
 - 2008/2009: 5 loans worth £0.57m were disbursed on projects with the value of £1.12m to realise £0.29m annual energy savings.
 - 2009/2010: 20 loans worth £1.05m were disbursed on projects with the value of £1.43m to realise £0.41m annual energy savings.
 - 2010/2011: 12 loans worth £0.64m were disbursed on projects with the value of £1.07m to realise £0.24m annual energy savings.
- During the last 3 years The Carbon Trust has also provided the following assistance:
 - 2008/2009 - The Carbon Trust delivered 19 technical energy surveys, identifying £1,540,000 annual energy savings
 - 2009/2010 The Carbon Trust delivered 15 technical energy surveys, identifying £2,930,000 annual energy savings
 - 2010/2011 to date Carbon Trust has delivered 7 technical energy surveys, identifying £0.04m annual energy savings.

- The National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) has engaged with 13 companies in 2008/2009, 4 companies in 2009/2010 and 60 companies in 2010/2011
- The Envirowise programme completed cost reduction audits in 16 companies in 2008/2009, 19 companies in 2009/2010 and 5 companies in 2010/2011.
- Invest NI's Sustainable Development Consultancy Framework supported 17 SME's in 09/10 and 3 SME's in 2010/11.

During 2009/10 Invest NI worked directly with Craigavon Borough Council to host a Sustainable Development Workshop for local businesses.

Invest NI has also engaged with 11 companies in 2009/2010 and 13 in 2010/2011 to scope their capability to enter Renewable Energy Supply Chains.

In 2008/2009 DETI paid out £4.96 million in Reconnect grants across Northern Ireland. This investment cannot be attributed by constituency.

Rose Energy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department or Invest NI has at any time granted funding to Rose Energy; and if so, to detail the amounts and nature of that funding.

(AQW 1381/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Neither DETI nor Invest NI has granted funding to Rose Energy Limited.

Rose Energy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Invest NI is prepared to offer capital construction funding of between £15million and £30million to the Rose Energy incinerator project at Glenavy, County Antrim.

(AQW 1382/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI continues to evaluate this project and the due diligence process is at an advanced stage. The outcome of this will determine if and to what extent an offer of financial support will be made and also what conditions will be attached.

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether Invest NI is prepared to offer capital construction funding to the Rose Energy incinerator project at Glenavy, County Antrim, despite planning approval for the incinerator being subject to a legal challenge by Communities Against the Lough Neagh Incinerator, which is not due to be heard until February 2011.

(AQW 1383/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI continues to evaluate this project and due diligence is at an advanced stage. The outcome of this will determine if and to what extent an offer of financial support will be made.

An appraisal which is carried out in accordance with the Industrial Development (NI) Order 1982 allows Invest NI to take a decision to provide financial assistance conditional on planning permission being secured.

Capital Funding

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether it is her Department's and Invest NI's policy to grant capital funding to development projects that have planning approvals subject

to legal challenge which are capable of being quashed after the award of said public monies to the company behind the development project.

(AQW 1384/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI has the ability to offer capital grant support towards a project which has not yet secured the necessary planning permission. In such an instance, the payment of grant would be conditional upon the project securing planning permission and no payments of grant would be made in its absence.

Under the terms of its letters of offer, Invest NI has the power to stop or claw back the payment of grant support where, in its opinion, a project has been abandoned or is not being implemented according to a Client's business plan. Where a project secures planning permission which subsequently becomes subject to legal challenge, Invest NI would therefore have the power to refuse to make payments against the offer as the Client would be unable to implement the project as approved.

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department will only allow Invest NI to offer capital construction funding for the Rose Energy incinerator project at Glenavy, County Antrim if the project is proven to be commercially viable and proven beyond reasonable doubt to be capable of functioning profitably without ongoing state aid following its construction.

(AQW 1385/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI has acted and will continue to act in accordance with the provisions as specified in the Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 in deciding whether or not to provide financial assistance for the Rose Energy project.

Invest NI continues to evaluate this project and the due diligence process is at an advanced stage. An offer of financial support will only be made if the project is proven to be commercially viable.

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if Invest NI intends to make a determination on its proposed offer of funding for Rose Energy's proposed incinerator at Glenavy before 31 December 2010; and why a determination needs to be made before this date.

(AQW 1402/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI continues to evaluate this project and due diligence is at an advanced stage. The outcome of this will determine if and to what extent an offer of financial support will be made. Invest NI has not committed to completing this work by a specified date.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what benchmarking exercises her Department conducts to assess their spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1483/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Northern Ireland Executive sets the Programme for Government and allocates resources accordingly across Northern Ireland departments.

DETI does not benchmark its expenditure against comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions, but monitors its expenditure against the budgets agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has contacted the Gaelic Athletic Association in relation to putting GAA related events on the Discover Northern Ireland website.

(AQW 1508/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) provides coverage for events which might be of interest to visitors on www.discovernorthernireland.com. The events covered are those which have been notified to us in advance by the event organisers or are provided by the local Tourist Information Centre (TIC) network, Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs) or relevant local authorities.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many apprentices have a placement within her Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1513/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment and its arms-length bodies currently have one apprentice on placement for the 2010/11 year. A second placement, which was for 3 months, has ended.

Department of the Environment

Dog Fouling

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been spent on cleaning dog fouling in each council area, in each of the last five years; and what action has been taken in each council area to ensure that dog owners clean up after dog fouling.

(AQW 1281/11)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): My Department does not hold the information requested. The Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Bill which I recently introduced to the Assembly will strengthen the powers available to district councils to control dogs and better address the issue of owners who fail to clear up after their dog.

Dog Owners

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment how many dog owners have been prosecuted for failing to clean after dog fouling in each council area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1282/11)

Minister of the Environment: Failing to clean up after a dog has fouled is not currently an offence. It is an offence, however, under Article 4 of the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 to permit a dog to foul and the following tables list the number of prosecutions through the courts for that offence in each of the last five years.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill currently before the Assembly provides for district councils to make dog control orders making it an offence, when being in charge of a dog on land to which the dog control order applies, not to remove faeces deposited by the dog at any time, or at any time during certain periods prescribed in the order.

2005/2006

Council	Number of cases taken to court	Number of cases of non-payment of fixed penalty waiting for court action
Belfast	18	0
Coleraine	1	0
Craigavon	1	0
Down	1	0
Newtownabbey	1	0
Total	22	0

2006/2007

Council	Number of cases taken to court	Number of cases of non-payment of fixed penalty waiting for court action
Belfast	25	0
Craigavon	0	1
Down	1	0
Larne	2	1
Newtownabbey	6	0
Omagh	0	11
Total	34	13

2007/2008

Council	Number of cases taken to court	Number of cases of non-payment of fixed penalty waiting for court action
Belfast	3	0
Coleraine	0	2
Craigavon	1	3
Down	1	0
Larne	1	0
Limavady	1	1
Newtownabbey	1	0
North Down	0	1
Total	8	7

2008/2009

Council	Number of cases taken to court	Number of cases of non-payment of fixed penalty waiting for court action
Belfast	9	1
Coleraine	1	0
Down	3	5
Larne	1	0
Newtownabbey	0	1
Total	14	7

2009/2010

Council	Number of cases taken to court	Number of cases of non-payment of fixed penalty waiting for court action
Belfast	18	0
Coleraine	1	0
Craigavon	8	2
Down	1	0
Newtownabbey	2	1
Total	30	3

Overpayments to Contractors

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department has made any overpayments to contractors in each of the last five years; and if so to detail (ii) the goods or services which were overpaid; (iii) the projects to which the overpayments related; (iv) the value of the overpayments; and (v) whether the overpayments were successfully reclaimed from the companies or individuals overpaid.

(AQW 1348/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Department has not recorded any losses relating to overpayments to contractors in its Resource Accounts in any of the last five years.

Information relating to overpayments that may have taken place but were successfully reclaimed and therefore not recorded in the Department's Resource Accounts, is not readily available. To extract this information would require individual business areas within the Department to review their records and to do so would result in disproportionate costs.

Castlebawn Shopping Centre Planning Application in Newtownards

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment to explain the criteria used and the reasons for granting a public inquiry into the Castlebawn Shopping Centre planning application in Newtownards.

(AQW 1363/11)

Minister of the Environment: The application for Castlebawn Shopping Centre has been referred to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) for a co joined Public Inquiry along with an application for an extension to Ards Shopping Centre. Both applications are being processed under the procedure for major applications which allows for the option to proceed by either the issuing of a Notice of Opinion

(to approve or refuse) or to ask the PAC to convene a public inquiry on which they will provide the Department with a report and recommendation.

The key test for Planning Service in deciding the process route will be whether a public inquiry is necessary to provide all the information to enable the planning decision to be taken.

The proposals taken together represent a total of over 50,000 sq. m gross of additional retail floorspace in Newtownards. Both applications give rise to significant retail impact issues that are the subject of dispute by the applicants and third parties. They have generated considerable local interest involving a range of commercial, political and community interests. In these circumstances it was felt appropriate to seek a public local inquiry to provide further information to assist in the decision making process. No date has as yet been set by the PAC for this inquiry.

Non-Governmental Organisations

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the Non-Governmental Organisations that are currently in receipt of grants from his Department; and (ii) the amount of funding in each case. **(AQW 1379/11)**

Minister of the Environment: The table below outlines the Non-Governmental Organisations that are currently in receipt of grants from my Department and the funding to be provided in the 2010-11 financial year.

ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING GRANT FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Organisation	(£)
Alliance Youth Works	22,925
An Creagan	29,100
Architectural Heritage Fund	25,500
Association of Preservation Trusts	5,000
Belfast Hills Partnership	74,784
Belfast City Council	10,000
British Trust for Ornithology	52,342
Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland	59,005
Copeland Bird Observatory	8,000
Countryside Access and Activities Network	170,000
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust	173,261
Colin Glen Trust	25,120
Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland	187,938
Derry City Council	64,250
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	24,500
Fermanagh District Council	15,000
Omagh District Council	15,000
Coleraine Borough Council	30,000
Armagh/Banbridge Councils	25,000
Craigavon Borough Council	18,243
Newry/Down Councils	22,000

Organisation	(£)
Quarry Products Association	12,525
Business in the Community	22,000
Lagan Valley Regional Park	84,000
Marine Conservation Society	17,995
Mourne Heritage Trust	251,126
National Trust	117,000
Newry & Mourne District Council	30,000
North Down Borough Council	46,000
Raptor Study Group	10,000
Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum	5,000
Northern Ireland Environment Link	209,993
River Bann & Lough Neagh Association	2,475
Royal Society For The Protection Of Birds	240,657
Speedwell Trust	64,690
Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee	90,950
Sustrans	1,785
Talnoy Avian Care Trust	31,877
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society	40,000
Ulster Wildlife Trust	224,847
Various Councils	40,000
Woodland Trust	120,778
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust	32,340
Total	2,753,006

ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING GRANT FROM THE PLANNING SERVICE

Organisation	(£)
Community Places	88,500
Disability Action	80,000
Township Heritage Initiative Scheme	
Lisburn City Centre Management Limited	21,000
Bushmills THI Partnership	49,876
Walled City Partnership Limited	20,000
Total	259,376

Dikerogammarus Villosus

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the threat posed by *Dikerogammarus villosus*; and what action his Department is taking to ensure it does not spread to Northern Ireland's waters.

(AQW 1386/11)

Minister of the Environment: It is widely recognised that invasive alien species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity loss worldwide. As the Killer Shrimp (*Dikerogammarus villosus*) has not been recorded in Ireland the immediate threat to local waters remains relatively low, although the risk assessment relating to an invasion by the shrimp has increased following its recent detection in a reservoir in England.

The Killer Shrimp is known to cause a range of negative environmental impacts. It is an aggressive predator with a high rate of reproduction making it an extremely successful invasive species with the potential to spread quickly and to cause harm to freshwater ecosystems. Experience in Europe suggests that it could spread rapidly through connected water bodies.

Its occurrence in Europe has been associated with a decrease in the diversity and abundance of invertebrates, in particular native shrimp species. In Europe it is also known to eat the eggs and fry of fish that spawn on the stony margins of lakes.

In response to such threats officials in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) work closely with the GB Non-native Species Programme Board. Following the discovery of the Killer Shrimp (*Dikerogammarus villosus*) at Grafham Water in England, my officials were notified and will continue to be kept informed of any developments by their counterparts in GB.

This East-West liaison is matched with North-South communication on invasive species with regular contact taking place with officials in the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Dublin, through a contract known as the 'Invasive Species in Ireland Project'.

Key aspects of this project have included the development of Codes of Good Practice for sectors considered to be at a high risk of introducing, or further spreading, invasive alien species. Codes of Good Practice have been developed for recreational water users and marina managers. My officials in NIEA have also provided training to several organisations and fishing clubs on invasive alien species identification and control.

In response to this notification my officials in NIEA issued a species alert and identification sheet around several Government Departments and other organisations. A species alert and ID sheet was also placed on the Invasive Species in Ireland website. In addition a press release was issued by my Department on 29 September 2010 warning of the threat of the Killer Shrimp. This press release outlined the need for water users to clean their boats and equipment before moving them to another water body.

Review of Public Administration

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Review of Public Administration, to detail the amount spent on Transition Committees (i) since their formation; and (ii) each month since June 2010, broken down by each Transition Committee area.

(AQW 1387/11)

Minister of the Environment: From their formation on 1 January 2009 to 30 September 2010 £1,579,164 has been spent on support costs for the Voluntary Transition Committees. During the period 1 July to 30 September £122,246 has been spent and is included in the overall figure. Details are set out in Table A and B.

TABLE A**EXPENDITURE ON VTCS FROM 1 JANUARY 2009 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2010**

	£
Antrim / Newtownabbey	159,524
Ards / North Down	188,708
Armagh/ Banbridge/ Craigavon	154,545
Ballymena/ Carrickfergus / Larne	175,460
Ballymoney/Coleraine/Limavady/Moyle	161,640
Belfast	171,546
Castlereagh/ Lisburn	177,749
Cookstown/Magherafelt/Dungannon	17,550
Derry/ Strabane	173,045
Down/Newry & Mourne	18,000
Fermanagh / Omagh	181,397
Total	1,579,164

TABLE B**Expenditure on VTCs from 1 July to 30 September 2010**

VTC	July	August	September	Total £
Antrim / Newtownabbey	0	10,800	0	10,800
Ards / North Down	0	0	0	
Armagh/ Banbridge/ Craigavon	0	26,351	0	26,351
Ballymena/ Carrickfergus / Larne	0	0	0	
Ballymoney/Coleraine/ Limavady/Moyle	0	0	0	
Belfast	0	0	0	
Castlereagh/ Lisburn	10,800	36,527	0	47,327
Cookstown/Magherafelt/Dungannon	0	0	0	
Derry/Strabane	0	0	0	
Down/Newry & Mourne	0	0	0	
Fermanagh/Omagh	10,800	26,968	0	37,768
Total	21,600	100,646	0	122,246

Transition Committee Change Managers

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Review of Public Administration, to detail the amount paid to Transition Committee Change Managers (i) since the formation of the Transition Committees; and (ii) each month since June 2010; and what duties these managers now carry out, given the decision not to proceed with the Reform of Local Government.

(AQW 1388/11)

Minister of the Environment: From 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2010 £384,780 has been spent on costs for Change Managers. During the period 1 July to 30 September £53,459 has been spent and is included in the overall figure. Details are set out in Table A.

No decision has been taken not to proceed with the Reform of Local Government. I intend therefore putting fresh proposals to the Executive shortly on reframing the delivery timetable for the Reform Programme.

Consequently the work of Change Managers, appointed to assist the transition process for the new councils, is ongoing. Over time their role has widened and become more focused on delivering an improvement, collaboration and efficiency agenda for the local government sector. I am keen that that valuable role continues and whilst I have suspended Transition Committee funding from 31 October 2010, I have decided that funding for Change Managers should continue until 31 March 2011.

TABLE A

EXPENDITURE ON CHANGE MANAGERS FROM 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2010

Month	Expenditure £
July	0
August	53,459
September	0
Total	53,459

Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total amount spent on (i) the Strategic Leadership Board; and (ii) Policy Development Panels (a) since their formation; and (b) in each month since June 2010.

(AQW 1389/11)

Minister of the Environment: The information is not held by my Department in the format requested. However records show that £429,611 has been spent on Taskforce Operational Expenses that include the costs of the Strategic Leadership Board and the Policy Development Panels, since their formation in 2007 and 2008 respectively, and other minor operational costs. Of that amount £35,100 was spent from 1 July to 30 September 2010.

Belfast City Airport Runway Extension

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment to explain the criteria used and the reasons for granting a public inquiry into the proposed runway extension at Belfast City Airport.

(AQW 1395/11)

Minister of the Environment: The planning application by George Best Belfast City Airport for an extension to the runway was designated a major application under Article 31 of the 1991 Planning Order.

The proposal raises a number of complex and controversial issues and has

generated a considerable number of representations, both for and against the proposal, and a good deal of media interest.

Article 31 (2) empowers the Department to request that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) hold a public inquiry for the purposes of considering representations on an application. The alternative is to serve a Notice of Opinion on the applicant indicating the decision which the Department proposes to make on the application.

The key test in deciding the process route is whether a public local inquiry is necessary to provide a forum for the presentation and consideration of issues arising from representations received and which need to be assessed to allow you to determine the application.

There were clearly matters arising from the representations received and the assessment of the application that indicated that there are material planning considerations that are the subject of dispute among the interested parties. Given the nature of the proposal and these complex impacts I decided that the planning decision should be informed by discussion and clarification on the varying viewpoints on the proposal through a public inquiry arranged by the PAC.

Proposed North-South Electricity Interconnector

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment to explain the criteria used and the reasons for granting a public inquiry into the proposed North-South electricity interconnector.

(AQW 1396/11)

Minister of the Environment: The planning application by Northern Ireland Electricity for the North-South electricity interconnector was designated a major application under Article 31 of the 1991 Planning Order.

The application has attracted in excess of 6000 objections.

Article 31 (2) empowers the Department to request that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) holds a public inquiry for the purposes of considering representations on an application. The alternative is to serve a Notice of Opinion on the applicant indicating the decision which the Department proposes to make on the application.

The key test in deciding the process route is whether a public local inquiry is necessary to provide a forum for the presentation and consideration of issues arising from representations received and which need to be assessed to allow me to determine the application.

There were clearly matters arising from the representations received and the assessment of the application that indicated that there are material planning considerations that are the subject of dispute among the interested parties. These involve the impacts on public health arising from the proposed development and the consideration of alternative technologies, principally associated with undergrounding the cable. Given the scale of the proposal and these complex impacts I decided that the planning decision should be informed by discussion and clarification of the varying viewpoints through a public inquiry arranged by the PAC.

Rose Energy's Proposed Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment (i) if the Planning Service has received an application for a 15km grid connection for Rose Energy's proposed incinerator at Glenavy; (ii) to outline the process and timescales for such an application; and (iii) whether it would be subject to a public inquiry, similar to that for the North-South electricity interconnector.

(AQW 1404/11)

Minister of the Environment:

- (i) To-date no planning application has been received by Planning Service for a 15km grid connection in association with the Rose Energy proposal.
- (ii) In the absence of a planning application for a grid connection Planning Service is not in a position to be specific about the likely processing timescale. With regard to the planning process, a planning application for a grid connection in association with the power plant would be determined on its merits against the prevailing planning policy framework and taking account of all material considerations.
- (iii) Whether a grid connection planning application would be declared a major application under Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, and the process route to be followed if it were declared such, are matters that could only be confirmed upon receipt of an application

and following consideration of the specific merits and detail of the proposal. The key test for the Department in deciding the process route on a major application is whether a public local inquiry is necessary to provide a forum for presentation and consideration of issues arising from representations received and which need to be assessed to allow the Department to determine an application.

Planning Service

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what measures the Planning Service has in place to consult with anglers who are directly involved as stakeholders on proposed developments near rivers and lakes.

(AQW 1408/11)

Minister of the Environment: In the determination of planning applications my Department is required to consult the District Council for the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated. My Department also consults with various public bodies and government departments as required.

In considering whether to consult with other statutory and non-statutory bodies, the Department may use its discretion as to whether it considers it necessary to inform a planning decision. In terms of planning applications likely to impact on any inland fishery the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure are consulted, particularly where proposals are accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement. It is through this process that such matters are properly considered.

My Department also advertises all planning applications in at least one local newspaper and publishes the notice on its website to bring it to the attention of those who may have an interest and would like to make comment, including anglers and angling clubs.

Furthermore, my Department neighbour notifies those people who occupy buildings on land adjoining the application site boundary and are located within 90m of the application site.

All comments received, either from consultees, individual organisations or members of the public are fully taken into account when Planning Service is considering a planning application.

Zebra Mussels

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the proliferation of zebra mussels in Northern Ireland waterways.

(AQW 1428/11)

Minister of the Environment: It is widely recognised that invasive alien species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity loss worldwide. The zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) was first discovered in Northern Ireland in the Shannon-Erne system in 1997.

Following this initial discovery a zebra mussel population boom was observed in the Erne system. Research has shown that zebra mussel populations experience a 'boom and bust' cycle. Recent observations of the population in Lough Erne suggest that it has reached the carrying capacity of the lake and is starting to reduce in density.

Since their initial discovery in Lough Erne zebra mussels have subsequently been detected in Carron Lough, Derrygonnelly in 2005, Lough Neagh in 2005, Lough Bresk in 2009 and most recently in Lower Lough MacNean in August 2010.

Research undertaken on Lough Neagh by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, a member of the Zebra Mussel Control Group led by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, has shown that the expansion of the zebra mussel population in Lough Neagh has not been as prolific as that initially observed in the Erne system. Monitoring work undertaken has however detected a population expansion centred around the South East corner of Lough Neagh in recent years. Surveys have also detected the presence of zebra mussel larvae and adults at various points around the Lough as far as the north shore.

My officials in the NIEA are at present undertaking a survey for zebra mussels at lakes considered to be at highest risk of invasion.

Goods Vehicles

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment what percentage of goods vehicles, checked up to July 2010, by Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers were; (i) not road worthy; (ii) overweight; and (iii) infringed drivers' hours rules.

(AQW 1478/11)

Minister of the Environment: During the period 1 January 2010 to 31 July 2010 inclusive, 1,786 commercial goods vehicles were stopped and checked by DVA enforcement officers at the roadside. Of these, 728 (40.8%) had one defect or more, 403 (22.6%) were overweight and 405 (22.7%) were operating in contravention of drivers hours requirements.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment how many complaints the Driver and Vehicle Agency has received in relation to goods vehicle operators based in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) outside Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1479/11)

Minister of the Environment: Between April 2005 and September 2010 a total of 784 complaints or reports on instances of alleged non-compliance were received.

Sensitive personal data is held only for business purposes and for no longer than is necessary. In some cases, therefore, we are now unable to provide information on how many complaints related to Northern Ireland goods vehicle operators compared with those for operators outside NI.

The following is a breakdown of the total number by financial year with, where possible, an indication of the number that related to Northern Ireland operators.

Period	Complaints/Non-Compliance Reports Received	No Relating to Goods Vehicle Operators in NI
April 2005-March 2006	88	n/a
April 2006-March 2007	132	n/a
April 2007-March 2008	161	n/a
April 2008-March 2009	155	147
April 2009-March 2010	142	138
April 2010-Sept 2010	106	104

Goods Vehicle (Licensing of Operators) Bill

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment when the Goods Vehicle (Licensing of Operators) Bill was enacted.

(AQW 1480/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Bill received Royal Assent on 22 January 2010. A programme is in place to implement the provisions of the Act by early 2012.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of the Environment what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile in relation to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions. **(AQW 1482/11)**

Minister of the Environment: My Department does not formally undertake benchmarking exercises as the different structures and administrative arrangements in respect of comparable organisations and functions in GB make meaningful comparisons extremely difficult. Indeed, a high level strategic benchmarking exercise undertaken this year by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in relation to the Comparison of UK and Ireland Environmental, Conservation and Heritage Agencies confirmed this position.

I can, however, confirm that when revising existing fees or setting new fees for departmental services, a broad comparison is normally made with the fees levied in GB. I can also confirm that the fees charged by my Department are broadly favourable with those charged in GB.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office at County Hall, Coleraine

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment what representations his Department has received regarding the retention of jobs in the Driver and Vehicle Licensing office at County Hall, Coleraine. **(AQW 1521/11)**

Minister of the Environment: Vehicle licensing is an excepted matter for which responsibility rests with the Secretary of State for Transport. It is administered by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) under an agreement with the Department for Transport, represented by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

In 2004, DVLA initiated a project to integrate the separate IT system for vehicle licensing operated by DVA with its own systems. Under this project, systems integration would have been accompanied by the centralisation in Swansea of much of the work carried out locally by DVA. Although the project was terminated by DVLA in 2009, owing largely to the pressures created by other competing development priorities, the potential for systems integration and the centralisation of vehicle licensing work, together with other cost-saving measures, is being kept under review by DVLA.

Consultancy Fees

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment how much each local council spent on consultancy fees in (i) 2007/08; (ii) 2008/09; and (iii) 2009/10. **(AQW 1555/11)**

Minister of the Environment: The information is not held centrally by my Department but should be available from any individual council in which you have an interest.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process. **(AQW 1591/11)**

Minister of the Environment: The figures for the number of policies (a) "screened out" as having no equality impact and (b) for those "screened in" as having an equality impact by the Department of the Environment are:

POLICIES “SCREENED OUT” AS HAVING NO EQUALITY IMPACT

May 2007- March 2008	20
April 2008- March 2009	38
April 2009- March 2010	53
April 2010- date	22
Total	133

POLICIES “SCREENED IN” AS HAVING AN EQUALITY IMPACT

May 2007- March 2008	Nil
April 2008- March 2009	1
April 2009- March 2010	1
April 2010- date	Nil
Total	2

The screening of policies for potential equality impact is mainstreamed as part of the normal policy making process and as such it is not possible to disaggregate the figures for (ii) the number of staff who are involved in the screening process and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

Planning Applications

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 994/11, what is the average time taken for a planning application to be assigned to a case officer within the Planning Service; and how many of the 341 planning applications listed had been waiting 30 days or longer.

(AQW 1675/11)

Minister of the Environment:

- (i) My Department is unable to determine the average time taken for a planning application to be assigned to a case officer as information is not recorded in this way. All applications are allocated as soon as an application is validated. The official statistics which were published for the first Quarter of 2010/11 indicate that 93% of applications were validated within 6 days of receipt and 99% validated within 10 days, exceeding the Business Plan targets of 85% and 95% respectively.
- (ii) At 26 October 2010, there were five applications with no case officer assigned for 30 working days or more since they were received.

These figures are subject to change on a daily basis as new applications are received and applications allocated.

It should be noted that the figures are extracted from a live dataset which is continuously updated and validated. They therefore should be regarded as indicative only at this point in time and should not be compared with any previous figures published by the Agency.

Department of Finance and Personnel**Civil Service Staff**

Mr D O’Loan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of Civil Service staff employed by each Government Department, broken down by (i) grade; (ii) departmental staff; and (iii) agency workers, in (a) January 2007; (b) January 2008; (c) January 2009; and (d) January 2010.

(AQW 179/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): The information requested has been placed in the Library. In view of the large number of grades within the Civil Service, the tables of permanent and casual staff show general service and analogous grades.

Unpaid Domestic Rates

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 502/11, for a breakdown by local council area of the unpaid domestic rates for the last three financial years.

(AQW 956/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The domestic rates unpaid for Northern Ireland by district council area at 03 October 2010, split by year of assessment, are as follows:

DC	Year of Assessment		
	2007	2008	2009
Antrim	£101,235.93	£288,974.03	£533,212.60
Ards	£258,407.22	£449,739.87	£816,234.93
Armagh	£226,445.83	£426,838.95	£867,147.58
Ballymena	£64,074.16	£147,834.37	£454,648.83
Ballymoney	£72,265.60	£99,918.05	£266,764.94
Banbridge	£158,355.90	£279,536.06	£504,358.30
Belfast	£1,773,771.69	£2,733,615.95	£5,124,510.94
Carrickfergus	£141,856.52	£249,304.07	£474,577.50
Castlereagh	£142,748.16	£261,958.65	£480,979.71
Coleraine	£133,197.57	£280,710.69	£656,591.24
Cookstown	£63,886.31	£119,807.66	£283,796.06
Craigavon	£305,508.10	£492,455.62	£1,325,425.54
Derry	£357,378.19	£643,964.42	£1,363,025.57
Down	£252,093.47	£449,626.36	£937,463.46
Dungannon & S.Tyrone	£114,945.55	£233,163.99	£562,023.87
Fermanagh	£122,352.34	£203,046.73	£431,574.26
Larne	£54,195.34	£118,167.86	£217,227.22
Limavady	£68,212.99	£148,059.54	£344,557.80
Lisburn	£366,335.93	£668,981.96	£1,257,402.23
Magherafelt	£63,881.62	£114,376.44	£316,827.07
Moyle	£44,493.43	£75,664.05	£161,506.53
Newry & Mourne	£361,946.63	£599,146.84	£1,388,647.07
Newtownabbey	£228,416.22	£431,034.76	£817,509.93
North Down	£247,111.58	£458,578.94	£822,433.42
Omagh	£85,961.46	£167,535.73	£404,536.88
Strabane	£96,633.03	£176,860.15	£368,594.85
Totals	£5,905,710.77	£10,318,901.74	£21,181,578.33

Note that these figures are the unpaid domestic rates as at 03 October 2010; they are not the domestic rates that were outstanding at the end of each financial year.

Land & Property Services continues to pursue all unpaid rates, whilst recognising the genuine financial difficulties of many ratepayers. The Agency seeks to agree payment arrangements with ratepayers where possible.

LPS had reduced the £157 million total prior year ratepayer debt to £106 million at 03 October 2010.

Legal Costs of Defending Litigation

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what the legal costs were to his Department of defending litigation cases in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1137/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The legal costs to the Department of Finance and Personnel of defending litigation cases in each of the last three years were as follows:

Financial Year	
2007/08	£1,409,635
2008/09	£610,822
2009/10	£440,717

Value of the UK Subvention to the Block Grant 2009/10

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the value of the UK subvention to the Northern Ireland block grant for the 2009-10 financial year.

(AQW 1193/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The latest information available on Northern Ireland's net fiscal balance is for 2007-08.

It is estimated that Northern Ireland had a fiscal deficit, that is the difference between public expenditure and revenue generated, of £7.3 billion in 2007-08. That is the equivalent of £4,167 per person in Northern Ireland.

Robin Hood Tax

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the proposed tax on transactions between financial institutions known as the Robin Hood Tax.

(AQW 1233/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The 'Robin Hood' or the 'Tobin' Tax was previously proposed following the financial crisis as one way of protecting against another collapse of the financial sector.

The Coalition Government announced in the June 2010 Budget that it will be introducing a bank levy from the 1st January 2011. France and Germany have made similar announcements.

A Government consultation on this levy has recently closed. While the specifics of how it might be operated are not yet known, it is intended to ensure the banking sector makes a fair contribution that reflects the risks it poses to the financial system and wider economy, and encourages banks to move away from riskier behaviours. Therefore it would appear that its objectives are broadly in line with those of the Robin Hood Tax.

Such steps to improve stability and reduce risk in the financial sector must be welcomed, however, success will depend on global co-operation and implementation

Walled City Signature Tourism Projects

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what role her Department had in the business case for the three Walled City Signature Tourism Projects in Derry, recently rejected by the Special EU Programmes Body; and if her Department is exploring options for appeal or re-submission of the bid.

(AQW 1246/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Derry City Council submitted an application for the Western Perspective Public Realm Project to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) under the Creating Shared Public Spaces theme of the PEACE III Programme. The application was assessed against the agreed programme selection criteria by the PEACE III Steering Committee in September 2010 but did not score sufficiently to be approved for funding. The Steering Committee is chaired by the SEUPB and includes social partners and elected representatives as well as departmental officials from DFP and OFMdFM. It scores applications on a consensus basis. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is not represented on the Steering Committee and has had no role in the assessment of this project.

I understand that SEUPB has scheduled a meeting with Derry City Council to discuss the outcome of the application and possible ways forward. The Theme remains open until 17 January 2011, allowing for resubmission of the application if appropriate. Alternatively, the Council might wish to avail of the PEACE III appeals procedure.

Overpayments to Contractors

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) whether his Department has made any overpayments to contractors in each of the last five years; and if so to detail (ii) the goods or services which were overpaid; (iii) the projects to which the overpayments related; (iv) the value of the overpayments; and (v) whether the overpayments were successfully reclaimed from the companies or individuals overpaid.

(AQW 1350/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Department has not recorded any losses relating to overpayments to contractors in its Resource Accounts for any of the last five years.

Information relating to overpayments that may have taken place but were successfully reclaimed is not readily available. To extract this information would require individual business areas within the Department to review their records and to do so would result in disproportionate costs.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) total operational costs; and (ii) total staff costs for the Central Procurement Directorate in each of the last three years, including a breakdown of the operational costs and the number of staff employed each year.

(AQW 1400/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The costs of Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in each of the last three years is provided below together with the number of staff employed:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Staff Number	350	362	357
	£000	£000	£000
Salary Costs	12,390	12,771	13,234
Other Operating Costs;			
Staff Travel and Subsistence	357	413	378
Staff Training and Professional Development	236	156	176
IT and Communications ⁽¹⁾	688	817	743
Stationery, Printing and Advertising	157	202	181
Depreciation, impairment, cost of capital	412	431	467
Other Expenditure ⁽²⁾	738	1,038	457
Total Operating Costs ⁽³⁾	2,588	3,057	2,402
Total Costs	14,978	15,828	15,636

Notes

- 1 IT and communications costs includes the annual operating costs of the e – sourcing NI web portal which allows businesses to access NICS procurement opportunities.
- 2 Other expenditure includes legal costs and the operating costs of Geotechnical drilling and laboratory facilities.
- 3 The majority of CPD staff are located at Clare House. Clare House costs are borne by DFP Properties Division which is responsible for the management of the Government Estate.

Capital Investment from Westminster

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for a breakdown of the £9.8 billion worth of capital investment spent since 2005 as described by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1415/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I don't know the basis for the £9.8 billion figure quoted by the Secretary of State. However, according to DFP figures Northern Ireland capital expenditure over the period 2005-06 to 2010-11 sums to nearly £9.1 billion. A breakdown by year is set out in the table below:

Year	Capital Expenditure £ 000s
2005-06	1,288,304
2006-07	1,392,168
2007-08	1,390,168
2008-09	1,672,339
2009-10	1,680,641
2010-11 (September Outturn Forecast)	1,669,360
Total 2005-05 to 2010-11	9,092,980

Mephedrone

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action is being taken to provide support and assistance to teenagers who are addicted to mephedrone.

(AQW 1162/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): The use of emerging substances, such as mephedrone, continues to be a concern. A range of services is available across Northern Ireland for young people who misuse alcohol or drugs, and these services also provide information, interventions, as well as treatment and support for those who misuse mephedrone. Services include awareness raising, information and prevention; access to the National Drugs Helpline (0800 77 66 00); counselling and mentoring services for those aged under 18; and access to statutory treatment and support services through GP referrals.

The Public Health Agency is also piloting four “one-stop-shop” services for children and young people across Northern Ireland. These services provide information, education, sign-posting and referrals for young people particularly in relation to alcohol and drug misuse, but also underlying issues such as suicide and self harm; mental health and wellbeing; sexual health; relationship issues; resilience; and coping with school/employment.

Causeway Hospital

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the business case for a renal unit at the Causeway Hospital.

(AQW 1167/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This project remains in the planning stage. The business case prepared by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust has been submitted to commissioners for their consideration. It has not yet been forwarded to the Department for assessment. Until such time I can not comment on its details.

Lung Cancer

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people (i) in total; and (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust area have been diagnosed with lung cancer in each year since 2003; and how the total figures compare with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1168/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: From 2004 to 2008 a total of 4,898 incidences of lung cancer were diagnosed in Northern Ireland.

Lung cancer incidences occurring in each Health and Social Care Trust between the years 2004 to 2008 are provided in the table below. Corresponding UK figures are only available for 2007.

LUNG CANCER INCIDENCE (ICD-10* C33-C34) IN N. IRELAND BY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AND YEAR

	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	NI	UK
2004	282	237	156	166	133	978	
2005	264	227	147	154	149	951	
2006	277	194	170	143	152	942	
2007	296	230	178	148	156	1020	39473
2008	291	225	180	161	141	1007	

* For a listing and explanation of ICD-10 codes see International Classification of Diseases for Oncology, 3rd Edition, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 2000. For an explanation of ICD-10 codes see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ICD-10_codes.

Further information relating to cancer can be accessed online at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/Data/OnlineStatistics/>

Lung Cancer

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people (i) in total; and (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust area died from lung cancer in each year since 2003; and how the total figures compare with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1169/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below gives the registered number of deaths from lung cancer in Northern Ireland by Health and Social Care Trust, 2003 to 2009. The table also includes the total number of lung cancer deaths registered in the United Kingdom for the same period.

Table 1: Number of lung cancer deaths registered in Northern Ireland by Health and Social Care Trust and Equivalent Figures for the United Kingdom, 2003-2009^P

Registration Year	United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	Health and Social Care Trust				
			Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western
2003	33,452	810	240	174	148	125	123
2004	33,080	837	257	205	131	133	111
2005	33,524	824	230	210	135	126	123
2006	34,244	850	252	174	137	143	144
2007	34,638	863	263	193	155	116	136
2008	35,333	927	279	218	146	151	133
2009P	35,071	906	241	210	147	162	146

1 Lung Cancer is defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD10) codes C33-C34.

P Provisional data.

Lung Cancer

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the prevalence of lung cancer (i) in Northern Ireland; and (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust in each year since 2003; and how the total figures compare with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1170/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information regarding the prevalence of lung cancer in Northern Ireland and each of the Health and Social Care Trusts from 2007 to date is not available. Information for the years 2003 to 2006 is given in the table below;

Year	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	NI	UK
Prevalence* (rate)							
2003	315 (77.8)	209 (40)	157 (39.3)	131 (37.8)	115 (38.2)	941 (47.5)	
2004	310 (76.8)	216 (41.4)	170 (41.9)	154 (43.1)	120 (40.7)	984 (49.4)	
2005	306 (76.1)	215 (40.9)	175 (42.6)	168 (47.2)	136 (46.1)	1016 (51.0)	
2006	316 (77.1)	209 (39.3)	181 (44.6)	154 (42.9)	141 (48.3)	1012 (50.53)	38141 (48.6)

* The total number of a patients whose first ever cancer diagnosis was lung cancer in the ten years up to 31st December of year of prevalence, and who were still alive on 31st December of year of prevalence. Rate (per 100,000) is obtained by using an European age standardised weighted average of age specific rates, i.e. the crude rates with each five-year age group

Lung Cancer

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people (i) in total; and (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust area reached the five year survival rate for lung cancer in the latest year for which figures are available; and how the total figures compare with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1172/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is not possible to provide figures on persons fully recovered from cancer because relapse is frequently possible.

The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry's website (link below) contains one, three, five and seven years survival times for lung cancer.

www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/Data/OnlineStatistics/TracheaBronchusLung/

Survival times broken down by Trust levels as well as UK figures are not available.

Lung Cancer

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people (i) in total; and (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust area reached the one year survival rate for lung cancer in the latest year for which figures are available; and how the total figures compare with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1173/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is not possible to provide figures on persons fully recovered from cancer because relapse is frequently possible.

The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry's website (link below) contains one, three, five and seven years survival times for lung cancer.

www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/Data/OnlineStatistics/TracheaBronchusLung/

Survival times broken down by Trust levels as well as UK figures are not available.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many rapid response vehicles are currently stationed at Knockbracken Healthcare Park; and how many are available for use in emergencies at any one time.

(AQW 1179/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Two rapid response vehicles (RRVs) are currently stationed at Purdysburn Ambulance Station which is located in Knockbracken Healthcare Park. Each RRV is dynamically deployed at a number of locations daily between 0700 to 0200hours distributed over, on average, a 16 hour period in a shift pattern which matches their availability with expected demand for emergency paramedic response.

Fire Station for Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an update on the provision of a new fire station for Limavady.

(AQW 1180/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I understand that Limavady Fire Station is on the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service priority list to be replaced over the next ten years.

My Department is facing huge financial pressures in relation to both capital and revenue budgets. When the budget position becomes clearer, I will have to look closely at my entire capital programme, including the development of any new facilities, before deciding what projects will be delivered and the timeframe for completing these schemes.

Occupational Therapists

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 545/11, to provide the requested information in relation to the number of people on the waiting list for assessment by an Occupational Therapist in the format in which it is available.

(AQW 1181/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: At 3rd September 2010, there were 5,359 patients waiting from referral for treatment by an Occupational Therapist.

Ambulance Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why his Department invested in training qualified ambulance staff to Emergency Medical Technician Level but placed these staff on non-emergency duties despite emergency ambulance cover being reduced due to the non-availability of emergency trained staff.

(AQW 1182/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The recruitment, training and deployment of ambulance service staff is entirely a matter for the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS). NIAS has confirmed that emergency ambulance cover has not been reduced due to staff shortages.

Ambulance Cover

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he can provide an assurance that there is adequate emergency ambulance cover across Northern Ireland at all times, particularly in rural areas.

(AQW 1183/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I can assure the Member that one of the core values of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) is to provide emergency ambulance services based on clinical priority, where and when they are needed and to those who need them. NIAS therefore

deploys its emergency response resources on the basis of a tactical deployment plan based on historical patterns of demand which ensures that the nearest available emergency response resource is sent to an incident. The effectiveness of this service delivery model can be seen in NIAS's continued success in improving its response times for life-threatening calls both at regional and local levels.

Malignant Melanoma

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people diagnosed with malignant melanoma in the last ten years, broken down by gender and the number of people under 30 years of age; 31 to 50 years of age and over 50 years of age; (ii) the percentage of fatalities in each age group; and (iii) the three main high risk factors specific to each age group. **(AQW 1184/11)**

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Table 1 shows number of incidences (diagnosis) of malignant melanoma skin cancer (ICD-10 C43) in Northern Ireland the last ten years (1999-2008), split by various age groups and gender. Source: The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry.

TABLE 1: INCIDENCES OF MALIGNANT MELANOMA SKIN CANCER (1999-2008)

Age group	Male	Female
0-30	82	154
31-50	245	379
51+	634	813

Table 2 shows number of fatalities to malignant melanoma skin cancer in Northern Ireland the last ten years (1999-2008) and the percentage this number represents of the number of incidences in the same time period, split by various age groups and gender.

TABLE 2: DEATHS BY MALIGNANT MELANOMA SKIN CANCER (1999-2008)

Age group	Male	Female
0-30	5 (6%)	5 (3%)
31-50	37 (15%)	26 (7%)
51+	177 (28%)	169 (21%)

The principal risk factor for malignant melanoma is over exposure to UV light in sunshine or sun beds. In addition, people with fairer skin have a higher risk of developing malignant melanoma, as do people with greater numbers of moles. A weakened immune system, some skin conditions (solar keratosis, xeroderma pigmentation, Gorlin's syndrome) or severe burns and skin ulcers can also increase risk. Source: The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry

The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry publishes comprehensive information on cancer incidence and survival which can be accessed online at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/Data/OnlineStatistics/>

Neurology Beds

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total cost of CHKS Ltd's analysis which was used to inform the decision to reduce the number of neurology beds at the Royal Victoria Hospital. **(AQW 1185/11)**

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: CHKS Ltd undertook an analysis for the Belfast Trust which covered 48 specialties at a total cost of approximately £1,500 - £1,800. The analysis included neurology services. It is not possible to extrapolate the specific cost of the analysis of the neurology service.

Inquiry into the C. Difficile Outbreak

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the cost to the Health Service of the inquiry into the C. Difficile outbreak in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's hospitals.

(AQW 1194/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is estimated that the total costs of the Public Inquiry will be around £2 million.

New Nursing Uniforms

Mr M Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the cost of providing the new nursing uniforms currently being distributed to each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1196/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A regional contract to deliver uniforms for all uniformed HSC staff has been awarded to a local supplier generating savings of 50% on uniform costs across the HSC. The estimated cost of implementation will be £3.5m over a 3-5 year period.

I am unable to confirm the element of this cost related solely to nursing uniforms due to the phased implementation that will take place over a number of years.

Political Party Conferences in England

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to his Department and each of its arms-length bodies of sending personnel to attend political party conferences in England in the last six months; and the number of personnel who attended on each occasion.

(AQW 1199/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: No costs have been incurred by the Department or associated bodies. As a matter of policy the Department does not send staff to attend political party conferences.

Ulster Hospital

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to create a medical records library at the Ulster Hospital.

(AQW 1204/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are currently no plans within the Ulster Hospital site redevelopment plan to create a medical records library.

Food Safety Promotion Board

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the efficiency savings that could be made at the Food Safety Promotion Board.

(AQW 1206/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Food Safety Promotion Board will fully implement the guidance issued by the two Finance Departments to all North South Implementation Bodies on identifying and delivering a cumulative 9% efficiency saving over the period 2011 to 2013. In addition my officials, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Children, are currently considering FSPB's draft Business Plan for 2011 and in doing so are examining if there is scope

for additional efficiency savings over and above those requested by the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department of Finance.

Uniform Fitters

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many people are currently employed in all the Health and Social Care Trusts as uniform fitters; (ii) how much has been spent on uniform fitters staff costs in each of the Trusts in each of the last three years; and (iii) how much is budgeted for uniform fitters in each of the Trusts for this financial year.

(AQW 1216/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

HSC staff involved in sizing uniforms carry out a variety of sewing functions including repairing curtains, bedclothes and making specialist clothes for patients.

24.68 Whole Time Equivalent workers are employed across the HSC to carry out these sewing functions. It is not possible to calculate the amount of time and therefore cost spent solely on uniform fitting.

Childcare

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people were employed in each Health and Social Care Trust area in childcare settings relating to the (i) community; (ii) statutory; (iii) voluntary; and (iii) private sectors.

(AQW 1218/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available.

Free Prescriptions

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment his Department has made, since the introduction of free prescriptions, of the prescribing and dispensing of inappropriate items that can be purchased elsewhere or do not directly relate to a patient's medical condition.

(AQW 1236/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Whether there are prescription charges in place or not my Department continuously seeks to promote responsible prescribing and dispensing of appropriate medicines. GPs and pharmacists are aware that they have a role to play in prescribing and dispensing sensibly.

It is not possible to determine what prescribed medication may not relate to a patient's medical condition. However, since the introduction of free prescriptions the prescription form has been revised to alert practitioners and the public alike that medicines cost the health service money. A new message on the reverse of the form asks everyone not to hoard medicines, to only order what they need and advises that many medicines are available to purchase over the counter.

'At Risk' Register

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children (i) aged 0-3 years old; (ii) aged 4-5 years old; and (iii) of primary school age have been on the 'At Risk' register in each Health and Social Care Trust area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1237/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Table 1 below details the numbers of children of primary school age on Child Protection (At Risk) Registers at 31 March in Health and Social Care Trusts, for the five years from 2005 to 2009. Figures are not available centrally for children aged 0-3 or 4-5 years old, which could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

TABLE 1**CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE (5-11) ON CHILD PROTECTION REGISTERS AT 31 MARCH**

HSC Trust	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	178	180	162	202	227
Northern	109	102	111	128	156
South Eastern	164	129	156	153	221
Southern	60	81	84	108	163
Western	133	131	143	160	184
Total	644	623	656	751	951

Medical Provision in Maghaberry Prison

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much has been spent by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust in meeting the cost of medical provision in Maghaberry Prison in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 1256/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer my colleague to the information provided in AQW 7714/10.

Average Bed Occupancy Rate

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the average bed occupancy rate has been in each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 1264/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Average bed occupancy rate for each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three financial years can be found at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-activity_stats-2/inpatients-1.htm

Suicides

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there is any evidence of a link between the increase in suicides and the growing use of social networking sites.

(AQW 1269/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I remained concerned about the potential dangers of harmful internet content on vulnerable people, particularly in relation to suicide and self harm. Studies published in recent years have highlighted the possible influence of internet sites on the occurrence of suicide, including the possibility of a “copycat” effect being reinforced by portrayal of suicide on sites and through social networking chat rooms. However, I am not aware of any evidence that establishes a direct relationship between suicides rates and the growing use of social networking sites.

The recommendations in the Byron Report into harmful material on the internet and in video games have been accepted by the national Government. The UK Council on Child Internet Safety has been established to oversee implementation of the report’s findings and my Department is represented on this body.

Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding his Department has allocated to the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency in each of the

last three years; and to detail the occasions that the NIMDTA has used premises other than its own for training purposes.

(AQW 1270/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: During the last three years the Department has allocated the following amounts to NIMDTA: 2007/08 £44.5m; 2008/09 £48.6m; 2009/10 £52.6m. The bulk of the annual allocation to NIMDTA is in respect of junior doctor salaries.

On average NIMDTA arranges 250 training courses annually on premises outside its own and only when it is cost effective and more practical to do so. NIMDTA's facilities are not sufficient to deal with the volume of events and the number of delegates attending. The majority of training is in respect of continuing professional development (CPD) courses for dentists and GPs, for which a fee is charged.

Out of Hours GP Service

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the criteria which will be used to monitor the changes to the Out of Hours GP service in the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and how the success or failure of the new service will be measured against these criteria.

(AQW 1280/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The criteria being used are those specified in the NI Quality Standards for face to face consultations.

Service performance is monitored on a daily basis and a monitoring report, which measures performance against the standards, is produced on a fortnightly basis.

Staff Expenses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much each Health and Social Care Trust paid to staff in expenses in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1288/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The purpose of travel and subsistence allowances is to reimburse staff for expenses incurred as a result of duties relating to their job. The total costs of expenses submitted by Trust staff over the last three years were:

HSC Trust	2007/2008 £m	2008/2009 £m	2009/2010 £m
BHSCT	6.6	5.1	6.4
NHSCT	9.5	10.2	10.3
SEHSCT	5.0	5.7	6.1
WHST	7.8	7.5	7.9
SHSCT	8.7	9.9	9.0
NIAS	0.3	0.4	0.4

Figures may not add due to rounding

Costs include mileage allowances, public transport costs, subsistence and car parking. Mileage allowance increased in 2008 due to rising fuel costs.

HSC Trusts are endeavouring to keep travel and subsistence costs to an absolute minimum. This includes utilising new technologies such as tele/video conferencing and delivering more meetings in house.

Accident and Emergency Units

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to reduce waiting times at Accident and Emergency units.

(AQW 1290/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have set very challenging targets for patients attending any Accident & Emergency Department in Northern Ireland which require that from April 2010, 95% of patients are either treated and discharged home, or admitted, within four hours of their arrival in an A&E Department, with no patient waiting longer than 12 hours. Trusts need to ensure that staffing levels and facilities are appropriate to meet the demand of their local populations and that this is kept under continual review. In addition, my Department has in place robust arrangements to monitor the performance at each hospital and to agree any action necessary to ensure targets are met.

Limited resources continue to pose a significant challenge in meeting targets, however I will continue to press for much needed additional funding to invest in our health service to meet rising demand including services provided in Emergency Care Departments.

UK Council on Child Internet Safety

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the Northern Ireland submission to the UK Council on Child Internet Safety action plan; and when the action plan will be published.

(AQW 1299/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The UK Coalition Government is currently considering how it intends to proceed in the area of the UK Council on Child Internet Safety. When the new administration has taken a decision on the way ahead we will consider what the implications are for Northern Ireland.

Lung Cancer

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people received active treatment for lung cancer, in the latest year available, in (i) the UK; and (ii) Northern Ireland, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1301/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: (i) Information on the number of people that have received active treatment for lung cancer in the UK is not available.

(ii) Information is available on the number of people admitted to Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland with a diagnosis of lung cancer.

The number of people admitted to hospital, broken down by HSC Trust, with a diagnosis of lung cancer recorded in the primary diagnostic position during 2009/10 is shown table below:-

HSC Trust	Belfast	South Eastern	Northern	Southern	Western	Northern Ireland
No. of Individuals Admitted	522	178	208	142	152	1,202

Source:- Hospital Inpatient System

Note the number of individuals has been approximated using a patient's Health and Care number.

Lung Cancer Treatment

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the estimated total expenditure on lung cancer treatment, for the latest year available, in (i) the UK; and (ii) Northern Ireland, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 1302/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Patients with lung cancer may be treated in an outpatient, primary care or A&E setting. Also, palliative care and other community services are provided in support of patients with lung cancer. Costs for these services are not collected at the level of detail required to enable us to estimate what has been spent on people with specific diagnoses. For this reason, it is not possible to estimate the total expenditure in NI or UK relating to lung cancer.

Supported Living Accommodation

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the provision of Supported Living Accommodation for people with severe mental health conditions in (i) each Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) each District Council.

(AQW 1303/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A range of supported housing accommodation is provided by various organisations, including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Associations, to enable people with severe mental health conditions to live as independently as possible in the community. Each place and the support provided with it by the relevant Health and Social Care Trust is specifically designed to meet the assessed needs of the individual.

However, as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is responsible for the provision of Supported Living Accommodation I suggest the member directs his question to the Minister for the Department for Social Development.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much it costs to purchase one Rapid Response Vehicle that is ready for use; and how many are currently available to the Ambulance Service.

(AQW 1314/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: An operational rapid response vehicle (RRV) costs approximately £35,000. The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service currently has a fleet of 40 RRVs.

Review of Support Provision for Carers

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the Review of Support Provision for Carers, which was carried out in conjunction with the Minister for Social Development.

(AQW 1315/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Further progress has been made in relation to many of the recommendations contained in the Review, such as:

- Some 30,000 copies of the revised A-Z for Carers were printed earlier this year and copies of the guide have now issued to all health and social care bodies and voluntary & community organisations working in support of carers;
- The HSC Board has agreed to take over chairmanship of the Carers' Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG), with appropriate representation from the Department. The reconstituted CSIG will take on a role of monitoring implementation of the other recommendations of the Review. It is anticipated that the CSIG, will meet again in mid November. At this meeting the membership

of the group will be reviewed and the new terms of reference (to include monitoring the new recommendations of the Joint Review) will be agreed and accepted;

- The Carers Support and Needs Assessment component of NISAT was issued to Trusts in December 2009 along with guidance indicating that it is the “tool of choice” for use in assessing the needs of carers in all adult programmes of care, thus ensuring a standardised approach to assessment;
- The analysis of the information received from all Trusts using the “Trust Self Audit Tool” has been completed and the findings were issued to the HSC Board for further action, in June 2010. The Department will contact the Board in mid 2011 to seek an update on progress;
- Officials have approached RQIA and a Review of the implementation of the DHSSPS Standards for Adult Social Care Support Services for Carers across relevant HSC services has been entered into their work programme for 2011/2012;
- A large body of information for carers has been added to the central nidirect website detailing available support from both DHSSPS and DSD. The targeted material covers support services for carers, information on benefits and signposting to appropriate organisations offering support services for carers.
- Officials continue to liaise with colleagues in the Department of Health to ascertain what progress has been made in relation to the operation and evaluation of the demonstrator sites;

Children Requiring Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Treatment

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been assessed as requiring (i) occupational therapy treatment; and (ii) physiotherapy treatment in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last three years; and to detail the current waiting time for each service from the point of assessment to the commencement of treatment.

(AQW 1332/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Overpayments to Contractors

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether his Department has made any overpayments to contractors in each of the last five years; and if so to detail (ii) the goods or services which were overpaid; (iii) the projects to which the overpayments related; (iv) the value of the overpayments; and (v) whether the overpayments were successfully reclaimed from the companies or individuals overpaid.

(AQW 1351/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The answer could not be provided due to the disproportionate cost involved in collecting the information.

Hepatitis B

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have contracted Hepatitis B through blood transfusions in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1372/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There have been no recorded cases of people contracting Hepatitis B through blood transfusions in each of the last 3 years.

Video Telemetry Appointment

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the estimated current waiting time for a patient to receive a Video Telemetry appointment at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 1499/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The waiting times for a Video Telemetry appointment at the 20th October 2010 at the Royal Victoria Hospital is shown in the table below:

	Length of time waiting in weeks					
	0-6 wks	> 6-13 wks	> 13-21 wks	> 21-26 wks	> 26-36 wks	> 36 weeks
Number of patients waiting	15	19	30	20	45	12

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

Residential Care Homes

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the residential care homes in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area where catering is supplied by Belfast Trust Hotel Services and (i) clients are currently provided with chilled meals; and (ii) chilled meals are planned to commence for clients; and the planned commencement date.

(AQW 1527/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The following statutory residential care homes in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust receive chilled meals from Knockbracken Foods, an integral part of the Trust: Killynure House; Fairholme; Pinelodge; Brae Valley; Ballyowen House (partial provision); and Orchardville House.

The following homes already receive a meals service and the Trust is currently in consultation regarding the provision of chilled meals, with a target date of mid January 2011, in the following homes: Grovetree House; Shankill House; Ballyowen House; Bruce House; and Chestnut Grove.

Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many days a week the MRI scanner in the Royal Victoria Hospital is available for use; and what is the current average patient waiting time for a scan.

(AQW 1573/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A MRI scanner is available for use in the Royal Victoria Hospital seven days each week.

My Department collects waiting times for MRI scans by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the average (arithmetic mean) waiting time for a MRI scan at the Royal Victoria Hospital. It is however possible to identify the median or mid point waiting time band, i.e. the timeband that contains the median waiting time.

The most recently available official statistics relate to the waiting time position at 30th June 2010, when the median waiting time band for an MRI scan at the Royal Victoria Hospital was '0 to 6 weeks'.

Department of Justice

Women's Aid

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the contribution made by Women's Aid in dealing with domestic violence.

(AQW 803/11)

Minister of Justice (Mr D Ford): Women's Aid deliver a vast range of much needed services to victims of domestic violence commencing when those victims most need support and continuing throughout the period of delivering justice against this heinous crime.

The 'Tackling Violence at Home' strategy for addressing domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland was launched in October 2005 by the Northern Ireland Office and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Women's Aid play a key role in the delivery of the Strategy and are actively involved in the Domestic Violence Regional Strategy Group and the supporting sub groups which have been established to take forward the four strands of the strategy and associated action plans.

Women's Aid continues to work closely with Government to progress key initiatives to assist and support victims of domestic violence and I welcome this opportunity to acknowledge and commend their commitment and tireless work for victims of domestic violence.

Surplus Land and Property

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Justice to detail any (i) land; and (ii) property owned by his Department which is currently deemed surplus to requirements, including the location of the land or property and any plans for its disposal.

(AQW 833/11)

Minister of Justice: The Department of Justice and the Agencies of the Department own the following land and/or property that have been identified as surplus;

Property Detail	Property Location	Disposal Plan
Mount Eden.	Belfast	The Department is considering a disposal strategy to achieve best value for money.
Whitefield House, Office Space.	Belfast	The property was placed for sale on the open market in January 2010. An offer to purchase the property has been accepted and it is hoped that contracts will be exchanged during October 2010
Domestic Dwelling.	Bangor	The property is currently for sale on the open market.
Courthouse.	Clogher	The property is currently for sale on the open market.
Prison Training College.	Millisle	Outline Planning permission for 177 dwellings was granted in December 2009. It is proposed to link the sale of the site to the future relocation of training to Desertcreat.
Maghaberry Quarry.	Maghaberry	Sold on open market. Purchaser has paid a deposit. The purchaser has asked to buy additional land which is being assessed with legal and valuation advice.
Surplus Agricultural Land.	Hydebank	Surplus land was identified on the extremities of the site. It was reviewed by a Planning Consultant but the land lies outside the 'development limit' and cannot presently be developed. Its current value is only as Agricultural land. It is planned to make a case to redesignate the development limit at the time of the next BMAP review after 2015.

Property Detail	Property Location	Disposal Plan
Police Station.	Forkhill	All listed assets are surplus to PSNI requirements, approval for disposal has been given by the Policing Board, and the disposal process, under agreed procedures, will proceed.
Police Station.	Gilford	
Police Station.	Middletown	
Police Station.	Dromara	
Police Station.	Toomebridge	
Police Station.	Loughgall	
Police Station.	Belcoo	
Police Station.	Belleek	
Police Station.	Coagh	
Police Station.	Fivemiletown	
Police Station.	Newtownbutler	
Police Station.	Stewartstown	
Police Station.	Bellaghy	
Police Station.	Donemana	
Police Station.	Newtownstewart	
Police Station.	Kilrea	
Police Station.	Templepatrick	
Police Station.	Kesh	
Police Station.	Kells	
Police Station.	Bessbrook	
Police Station.	Mountpottinger	
Police Station.	Portadown	
Police Station.	Greyabbey	
Police Station.	Markethill	
Police Station.	Pomeroy	
Police Station.	Claudy	
Police Station.	Portstewart	
Police Station.	Rathfriland	

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Justice how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued in each local council area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 875/11)

Minister of Justice: The Department of Justice has been notified by the relevant authorities of the following number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in each local council area in each of the last five years;

ASBOS BY DISTRICT COUNCIL 2005 - 2009

District Council	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Total
Antrim	2		1	1		4
Ards						0
Armagh	1		1			2
Ballymena	5	17	4	9		35
Ballymoney						0
Banbridge						0
Belfast	5	2	11	5	1	24
Carrickfergus	1					1
Castlereagh	1			1		2
Coleraine	4	1			3	8
Cookstown			1			1
Craigavon	3			1		4
Derry				3		3
Down		1	2			3
Dungannon & South Tyrone				3	1	4
Fermanagh			1	1	2	4
Larne		2			1	3
Limavady						0
Lisburn		1				1
Magherafelt					1	1
Moyle						0
Newry & Mourne	1	4	1	2		8
Newtownabbey	1	3	2	3		9
North Down	1			3		4
Omagh						0
Strabane		1				1
Total	25	32	24	32	9	122

Notes: The Anti-social Behaviour (NI) Order 2004 defines relevant authority as district councils, PSNI or Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Roe House in Maghaberry Prison

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice how much was spent on cleaning costs in Roe House in Maghaberry Prison following the recent protest by prisoners.

(AQW 1247/11)

Minister of Justice: Approximately £45,000 was spent on cleaning of Roe House following the protest by prisoners.

Maghaberry Prison

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how much has been spent on the separated section of Maghaberry Prison since the agreement was reached ending the recent protest by republican prisoners; and (ii) what capital works have been carried out, to date, or are planned, as part of the agreement.

(AQW 1248/11)

Minister of Justice: Since the agreement on that date, the delivery of the regime for separated prisoners in Bush and Roe Houses has resulted in additional staff costs of approximately £75,000.00

In line with the agreement, a programme of work was put in place to restore Roe House to full operational condition, and to deliver a number of infrastructural changes for Roe and Bush Houses which include:

- a new search facility for Bush and Roe Houses;
- alterations to provide alternative secure access to both Bush and Roe exercise yards;
- a secure link from each exercise yard to the adjacent Astro turf pitch; and
- additional security for the Bush and Roe Astro turf pitches.

In addition NIPS has undertaken refurbishment work, including painting and floor covering of staff and prisoner areas and replacement of all in cell sanitary ware and cell doors damaged during the protest.

Non-payment of Fines

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been committed to prison for non-payment of fines in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) the type of fine; and (ii) the associated length of time served.

(AQW 1250/11)

Minister of Justice: Details of the number of prison receptions on fine warrants in the last three years are shown in the table below.

Financial Year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Total prison receptions for non payment of fines.	1678	1724	1778

The Prisoner Record Information System (PRISM) does not break down fine warrants according to the nature of the offence for which the fine was imposed; consequently this information is not available without conducting a manual search, which could only be done at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

Similarly, it is not currently possible to disaggregate the time served exclusively for fine default for individual offences without conducting a manual search at disproportionate cost.

Overpayments to Contractors

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether his Department has made any overpayments to contractors in each of the last five years; and if so to detail (ii) the goods or services which were overpaid; (iii) the projects to which the overpayments related; (iv) the value of the overpayments; and (v) whether the overpayments were successfully reclaimed from the companies or individuals overpaid.

(AQW 1349/11)

Minister of Justice: The Department of Justice came into existence on 12th April 2010. Details of overpayments to contractors before that date are a matter for the previous department.

Prisons

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice to list all items currently available for purchase and hire to prisoners in each prison.

(AQW 1364/11)

Minister of Justice: 1364/11 and 1367/11 Each individual prison establishment has a range of items available for sale to prisoners through 'tuck shops'. Copies of the tuck shop price lists which detail the items for sale at each establishment have already been deposited in the Assembly Library. (AQW 882/11 refers). Prisoners are able to hire televisions and may take out a weekly subscription to hire Sky Television.

1367/11 Table A shows the total amount paid by prisoners, for the purchase and hire of items in each establishment for the last three years.

Table A	Total Purchase/Hire Amount £S		
	Hydebank Wood	Maghaberry	Magilligan
Financial Year			
07 – 08	207,881.30	753,699.68	339,298.31
08 – 09	213,191.85	741,887.63	386,954.73
09 – 10	216,904.55	760,684.11	376,854.04

(Table B shows the total cost to each prison establishment for the provision of these items for the last three years.

Table B	Total Cost To Prisons £S		
	Hydebank Wood	Maghaberry	Magilligan
Financial Year			
07 – 08	194,016.66	673,279.28	296,679.03
08 – 09	200,092.23	669,464.04	347,365.89
09 – 10	193,767.32	695,594.13	326,715.95

Prisons

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the total amount paid by prisoners for the purchase or hire of items available in prison, in each of the last three years, broken down by prison; and (ii) the total cost to each prison of providing these items.

(AQW 1367/11)

Minister of Justice: 1364/11 and 1367/11 Each individual prison establishment has a range of items available for sale to prisoners through 'tuck shops'. Copies of the tuck shop price lists which detail the items for sale at each establishment have already been deposited in the Assembly Library. (AQW 882/11 refers). Prisoners are able to hire televisions and may take out a weekly subscription to hire Sky Television.

1367/11 Table A shows the total amount paid by prisoners, for the purchase and hire of items in each establishment for the last three years.

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Forensic Evidence

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases are currently outstanding because of delays in the processing of forensic evidence due to budget reasons, broken down by policing district. **(AQW 1370/11)**

Minister of Justice: The number of cases currently outstanding because of delays in the processing of forensic evidence due to budget reasons is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Sale of Goods Produced by Prisoners

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Justice how much money has been generated by the sale of goods produced by prisoners in each of the last five years, broken down by the type of goods produced in each prison. **(AQW 1435/11)**

Minister of Justice: The table below sets out how much money has been generated by the sale of goods produced by prisoners in each establishment over the last five years.

Money generated by the sales of goods produced by prisoners

	Hydebank Wood	Maghaberry	Magilligan
2009/10	£10623	£9277	£27710
2008/09	£28814	£10814	£40901
2007/08	£3543	£6948	£8743
2006/07	£6687	£7463	£12530
2005/06	No records available	£8067	£16342

Further details could only be supplied at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

The income from sales is used to offset the cost of the materials. A percentage of the profits goes to the Governor's Fund and to charity.

Speeding Tickets

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Justice how many speeding tickets have been issued in each of the last five years; and how much revenue this has generated.

(AQW 1445/11)

Minister of Justice: I would refer the Member to the reply I gave on 14 July 2010 to AQW 8099/10.

Unfixed Speed Camera Vehicles

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Justice how many drivers of unfixed speed camera vehicles have been convicted of speeding in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1462/11)

Minister of Justice: The number of people in the police who have been convicted of speeding is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Director General for the Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice what progress is being made to recruit a new Director General for the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 1468/11)

Minister of Justice: The post is currently being advertised, in the regional and national press, with a closing date for applications of 5 November 2010.

The post will also be advertised on www.niprisonservice.gov.uk, www.nijobs.com and www.jobsnation.co.uk.

Governor's Position at Maghaberry Prison

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice when an announcement will be made on the Governor's position at Maghaberry Prison.

(AQW 1469/11)

Minister of Justice: The Prison Service announced on 4 June plans for filling the Governor in Charge post at Maghaberry Prison, consistent with the Pearson Review Team audit report published in March this year.

Accordingly, an open competition was held. The appointment panel for the posts of Governor in Charge at Maghaberry and Magilligan interviewed candidates on 29 and 30 September. Unfortunately, the panel concluded that it was not possible to make a substantive appointment to either post, through those competitions, at this time.

While I am most appreciative of the commitment of the current acting Governors, it remains the Prison Service's intention to seek to make substantive appointments through further selection exercises.

My Department will shortly initiate discussions with the Department of Finance & Personnel about a range of practical issues in connection with the process for fulfilling the post at Maghaberry.

Fireworks

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Justice what plans his Department has to review the regulations on the availability and use of fireworks.

(AQW 1515/11)

Minister of Justice: I have no plans at present to review the Regulations on the availability and use of fireworks.

Grants to Assist Community-based Groups

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Justice what grants are available through his Department or its arms-length bodies to assist community-based groups with capital builds for new premises.

(AQW 1516/11)

Minister of Justice: No grants are available through The Department of Justice or its arms length bodies to assist community-based groups with capital builds for new premises.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice to detail, for the period from April 2010 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1594/11)

Minister of Justice: I view the need to conduct equality screenings during the development of new policy, whether internal or external, or the amendment of existing policy as an important part of good policy development and I am committed to ensuring that the obligations are fully met.

The Department has recently put in place new procedures to support the screening process and ensure it is robust. This reflects the revised guidance on Section 75 published by the Equality Commission.

Since 12 April 2010 the Department of Justice, and associated bodies, have completed 137 screenings, of which 135 were 'screened out' and 2 were 'screened in'. The screenings include both internal and external policies. It is worth noting that 20 of the screenings relate to the Justice Bill where an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

As with other Departments, screening represents a percentage of the work carried out by staff in the Department, and its associated bodies, and it is therefore not possible to record the numbers involved.

Equality screening is an integral part of the work on developing policy. Therefore, separate costs associated with screening are not recorded.

Department for Regional Development

Residents Parking Schemes in Derry City

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the provision of residents parking schemes in Derry City.

(AQW 1198/11)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has advised that the proposed Residents' Parking Scheme for the Bogside area of Derry is currently being taken through the legislative process. It is hoped that, subject to further public consultation, the scheme can be fully implemented by mid-2011.

Proposals for a second scheme encompassing the Bishop Street, Fountain and Abercorn Road areas of Derry are under consideration.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1224/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Within Translink 16 apprentices are currently employed in a range of trades and within NIW 5 apprentices are being recruited within the mechanical and engineering field.

The Department currently has no apprentices. We are however working on a commitment for 2010/11 with the Programme-Led Apprenticeship Scheme to place 4 apprentices within general administration roles and a further 10 in Roads Service.

Cycling Facilities in Belfast

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any proposed initiatives to improve facilities for cyclists in Belfast, in particular the provision of more cycle lanes.

(AQW 1245/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that its cycling proposals are in accordance with Chapters 4 and 8 of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015, and is currently working towards the completion of a number of schemes aimed at providing cost effective additions to the cycling network in Belfast.

In addition to the capital investment in cycling measures by Roads Service, my Department promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport, including cycling, through its Travelwise initiative, as part of its work with schools, employers and the general public. Travelwise is funding a Sustrans Bike It project for 12 schools in the greater Belfast area in the current school year. I have also established an advisory Active Travel Forum to bring forward recommendations to me for an Active Travel Strategy and this will include proposals to encourage and increase cycling. I expect proposals for a high level Active Travel Strategy by the end of 2010.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling its Autumn Reports to Councils.

Traffic Calming Budget in Belfast

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact that the reduction in the traffic calming budget in Belfast, from 2.1 million to £300,000, will have on traffic control within the city; and what plans will not go ahead as a result of this reduction.

(AQW 1257/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the figures stated by the Member relate to Roads Service's overall traffic calming budget and do not relate solely to Belfast.

For the past number of years, my Department's Roads Service has been implementing traffic calming schemes in the Greater Belfast area. These are an important element of local road safety strategies and are designed to control the speed of traffic in residential areas. The reduction in the overall budget and budget for Eastern Division (which includes Belfast) will not have any impact on existing schemes,

but there will be a reduction in the number of schemes to be implemented this year. It is considered that this will have a minimal impact on traffic control within Belfast city, as a whole.

Roads Service is proactive when developing a programme of traffic calming schemes and, as the consultation and legislative process can sometimes be protracted, will usually have numerous schemes in various states of readiness. It is therefore anticipated that the other proposed schemes will go ahead on a prioritised basis, subject to the availability of finance.

Given the current financial climate, my Department is faced with the extremely difficult task of having to allocate finite resources to its numerous competing demands. Unfortunately, in the prevailing circumstances, it is not possible to continue to fund all of Roads Service's functions at the same levels as in previous years.

Cycling Budget

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) why his Department's cycling budget for the Greater Belfast area has been cut from £450,000 to £8,000; and (ii) for his assessment of the impact that this reduction may have on the future provision of cycling facilities across the city.

(AQW 1258/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, by utilising a range of measures, such as road safety engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network.

However, given the realities of the current financial climate, Roads Service is faced with the extremely difficult task of having to allocate finite resources to its numerous competing demands. Unfortunately, in the prevailing circumstances, it is not always possible to continue to fund all of Roads Service's functions at the same levels as in previous years.

In overall terms, although there has been a reduction in the 2010/11 budget allocation for cycling measures, the published Roads Service Targets do not reflect the same level of reduction. For example, in 2009/10, Roads Service's overall budget was £981,000, with an associated target to provide 20km of cycle lanes. However, this year, with a £108,000 allocation, which is an 89% reduction; the target is to provide 12km of cycle lane, which equates to a 40% reduction.

With regard to the impact of a reduced allocation on the future of cycling facilities in the Greater Belfast area, this area has benefited from several years of investment and the cycling infrastructure is well established. However, it remains Roads Service intention to continue to implement, in so far as available resources permit, the cycling infrastructure as set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, which will complement the existing National Cycle Network in the North.

In addition to the capital investment in cycling measures by Roads Service, my Department promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport, including cycling, through its Travelwise initiative, as part of its work with schools, employers and the general public. Travelwise is funding a Sustrans Bike It project for 12 schools in the greater Belfast area in the current school year. I have also established an advisory Active Travel Forum to bring forward recommendations to me for an Active Travel Strategy and this will include proposals to encourage and increase cycling. I expect proposals for a high level Active Travel Strategy by the end of 2010.

NI Water: Chief Executive

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 619/11, whether a file note, a record of conversation, an email or any other correspondence exists of the conversation between the Chief Executive of NI Water and John Mills from his Department on 18 January 2010; and if so to detail the contents.

(AQW 1328/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I understand that, in response to your Freedom of Information request dated 9 July 2010, you were provided with a number of e-mails, correspondence and

information which contained a record of a telephone conversation on 18 January 2010 relating to the Chief Executive's resignation.

Your AQW 619/11 referred to any conversations "regarding the withdrawal of the Chief Executive's resignation". I would refer you back to my answer to AQW 619/11.

Coleraine Town Bus Service

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to carry out a review of the Coleraine town bus service to include the Somerset Park and Somerset Crescent areas.

(AQW 1374/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have no plans to carry out a review of the Coleraine town bus service. Translink, which has operational responsibility for the service, has advised me that it would be happy to consider a request from residents of Somerset Park and Somerset Crescent areas to extend the current services. However, any change could only be considered in the current financial climate if supporting evidence of a reasonable level of demand is available.

Penalty Charged Notices

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development how much revenue NCP has generated since issuing Penalty Charged Notices in (i) Lurgan; (ii) Portadown; and (iii) Banbridge.

(AQW 1405/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that figures for revenue from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) are not compiled on a town-by-town basis. However, using percentage figures for the number of PCNs issued for the three towns in question, and based on an assumption that payment rates in these towns are similar to elsewhere, estimated figures since the commencement of the current enforcement contract are set out in the table below:

	Total PCN Revenue	PCNs Issued in Lurgan (%)	Estimated Revenue Lurgan	PCNs Issued in Portadown (%)	Estimated Revenue Portadown	PCNs Issued in Banbridge (%)	Estimated Revenue Banbridge
Nov 06– Mar 07	£1.3M	1626 (2.8%)	£35,600	2191 (3.7%)	£47,000	900 (1.5%)	£19,100
Apr 07– Mar 08	£4.4M	2691 (1.7%)	£75,300	4022 (2.5%)	£110,700	1688 (1.1%)	£48,700
Apr 08– Mar 09	£4.1M	1597 (1.1%)	£45,200	3265 (2.3%)	£94,600	1280 (0.9%)	£37,000
Apr 09– Mar 10	£3.7M	1767 (1.4%)	£52,100	3954 (3.0%)	£111,700	847 (0.7%)	£26,100
Apr 10– Sep 10	£1.9M	760 (1.2%)	£22,700	1032 (1.7%)	£32,200	362 (0.6%)	£11,400

Note: The figures above relate to PCNs issued on-street and in Roads Service car-parks.

I can further advise that PCN payments are made to Roads Service. All revenue generated by the payment of PCNs is used, along with income from car-parking and other charges, to supplement the overall financing of Roads Service by Central Government. The cost of enforcing on-street parking restrictions and managing off-street car parks exceeds the total revenue received.

Cycling Budget

Ms A Lo asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of recent budget cuts announcements, why the cycling budget in Belfast has been reduced by 98%, while spending on strategic roads increased by 51%.

(AQW 1485/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, by utilising a range of measures, such as road safety engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the pedestrian and cycling network.

However, given the current financial climate, my Department is faced with the difficult task of having to allocate finite resources to its numerous competing demands. Unfortunately, in the prevailing circumstances, it is not possible to continue to fund all of Roads Service's functions at the same levels as in previous years.

In overall terms, although there has been a reduction in the 2010/11 budget allocation for cycling measures, the published Roads Service Targets do not reflect the same level of reduction. For example, in 2009/10, Roads Service's overall budget was £981,000, with an associated target to provide 20km of cycle lanes. However, this year, with a £108,000 allocation, which is an 89% reduction; the target is to provide 12km of cycle lane, which equates to a 40% reduction.

With regard to the reduced allocation on the cycling budget in the Greater Belfast area, this area has benefited from several years of investment and the cycling infrastructure is well established. However, it remains Roads Service's intention to continue to implement, in so far as available resources permit, the cycling infrastructure as set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, which will complement the existing National Cycle Network in the North.

In addition to the capital investment in cycling measures by Roads Service, my Department promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport, including cycling, through its Travelwise initiative, as part of its work with schools, employers and the general public. Travelwise is funding a Sustrans 'Bike It' project for 12 schools in the greater Belfast area in the current school year. I have also established an advisory Active Travel Forum to bring forward recommendations to me for an Active Travel Strategy and this will include proposals to encourage and increase cycling. I expect to receive proposals for a high level Active Travel Strategy by the end of 2010.

With regard to spending on strategic roads, this increase reflects planned final payments following the successful implementation of a number of significant improvements to the strategic road network (e.g. A1, A4). It should be noted that new footways and provision for cyclists have been provided in conjunction with these works.

Water Table in the Ards Peninsula

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development for his Department's assessment of the rise in the water table in the Ards Peninsula as a result of the closure of the Lough Cowey and Portavoe reservoirs.

(AQW 1491/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that, in its assessment, there was no impact on the level of the water table in the Ards Peninsula when the abstraction of raw water ceased at reservoirs at Lough Cowey in 2008 and Portavoe during the 1980s.

Spending Profile

Dr S Farry asked the Minister for Regional Development what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1507/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is a member of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), which is a local government body working with over 300 councils throughout Britain, promoting excellence in public services. APSE publishes a range of performance indicator reports including those for highways, winter maintenance and street lighting, which help to inform the associated work activities in Roads Service.

Roads Service is also a founding member of the Celtic Highways Benchmarking Club, which includes highway authorities from Scotland, and The Isle of Man, with the aim of improving our service delivery through comparison and the sharing of best practice.

I can also advise that Roads Service benchmarks the performance of its own internal business areas across a range of work activities, as part of their performance management system.

In relation to public transport, the Department is in the process of finalising a review of the Outline Business Case for public transport reform. Among other things, this examines the cost effectiveness and cost efficiency of Translink's operations against comparator operators in broadly similar settings in Britain.

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1509/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The amounts paid by the Department for Regional Development and its agencies for legal services in each of the last five years are as follows:

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£1,848,695	£1,687,135	£1,705,862	£1,265,655	£1,441,986

The firms engaged over the last five years are as follows:

- Agnew Andress Higgins Solicitors
- Allianz Direct
- Anderson Agnew & Co Solicitors
- Andrew T Armstrong & Co
- Anne Kelly Solicitors
- Anthony A McCormick
- Archer Heaney & Magee Solicitors
- Arthur Cox N.I.
- Arthur J Downey & Co
- Babington & Croasdaile
- Barr & Co
- Barry Brady Solicitors
- Barry Fox Solicitors
- Basil Glass & Co
- Bernadette Mulholland Solicitors
- Bernard Campbell & Co
- Bogue & McNulty Solicitors
- Boyce Timothy Mr
- Boyd Rice & Co
- Breen Rankin Lenzi
- Brendan Kearney & Co
- Brennan Paul S
- Breslin McCormick & Co
- Brian Kelly Solicitors
- Broolly Jameson Solicitors
- Brown, McConnell, Clark, Mckee
- Burnside & Logue
- C & H Jefferson Solicitors
- C & J Black Solicitors
- C Murnion & Co
- Campbell & Caher Solicitors
- Campbell & Co Solicitors
- Campbell & Haughey Solicitors
- Campbell Bates & Co Solicitors
- Campbell Fitzpatrick Solicitors
- Campbell Stafford Solicitors
- Canopus Managing Agents
- Carmel O'meara & Co Solicitors
- Carnson Morrow Graham
- Casey & Casey Solicitors
- Casrson Mcdowell Solicitors
- Ch Mcelhenny Solicitor
- Christopher Millinson
- Ciaran J Mccaffrey & Co
- Ciaran Rafferty
- Cleaver Fulton Rankin Solicitors

- Cmg Solicitors
- Colmer Adrian Wg Mr
- Comerton & Hill Solicitors
- Con Lavery & Co Solicitors
- Con O'hagan LlB
- Conn & Fenton Melvyn T Doherty Solicitors
- Connolly Paul
- Connolly Rosemary
- Conor Downey & Co Solicitors
- Conway Todd & Co Solicitors
- Cousins & Gilmore Solicitors
- Cp Steele Solicitor
- Crawford Scally & Co
- Creighton & Co
- Ct Mcalpine & Son Solicitor
- D & E Fisher
- Da Mckenna & Co
- David A Martin
- David G Bell Solicitors
- David Robinson Associates
- Deery Mcguinness & Co Solicitors
- Delaney & Co
- Denis D Humphrey Solicitors
- Denton Heather Ms
- Denton Wilde & Sapte
- Dermott Walker Madden & Co
- Desmond J Doherty Solicitors
- Dg Mccormick & Co Solicitors
- Diamond Herons Solicitors
- Dickson & McNulty Solicitors
- Dillon & Co Solicitors
- Djw Consulting (Ni) Ltd
- Dm Kane & Co
- Dominic Mcinerney Solicitors
- Donaghy Carey Solicitors
- Donaldson Mcconnell & Co
- Donard King & Co
- Donnelly & Kinder Solicitors
- Donnelly & Wall
- Donnelly Neary & Donnelly
- Doran Mccoy Steele Solicitors
- Doris & Macmahon
- Dundas & Wilson
- E & L Kennedy Solicitors
- Eamonn Mcevoy & Co
- Edward Dougan & Co Solicitors
- Edwards & Co Solicitors
- Ej Lavery & Co
- Elaine Early & Co
- Emmet J Kelly & Co Solicitors
- Fahy Corrigan
- Falls & Hanna
- Faloon & Co
- Faloon & Toal Solicitors
- Ferguson & Co Solicitors
- Ferguson Solicitors
- Fitzsimmons Kinney & Mallon
- Fj Madden Solicitors
- Flynn & Mcgettrick
- Fox & Associates
- Francis Curley
- Francis Hanna & Co Solicitors
- Gah Lockhart Solicitors
- Gallery & Campbell Solicitors
- Gaston Graham & Co Solicitors
- Gerald P Henvey
- Gerard P Mooney Solicitor
- Gibson & Quigley Solicitors
- Gillan Barr & Co Solicitors
- Gillen & Co Solicitors
- Gordon Bell & Son Solicitors
- Gordon Fw Mcilwrath & Co
- Gordon Wallace & Co
- Gr Ingram & Co
- Gray Magee Solicitors
- Greer Hamilton & Gailey Solicitors
- Gus Campbell Solicitors
- Hagan & Mcconville Solicitors
- Hamilton & Thompson Solicitors
- Hanna Francis & Co Solicitors
- Harrison's Solicitors
- Harry Mcpartland & Sons
- Hart & Co
- Harte Coyle Collins
- Hastings & Co Solicitors
- Haughey & Co Solicitors
- Hb Marley Solicitors
- Hegarty & Mcfeely Solicitors
- Higgins Holywood Deasley
- Hilary Carmichael Solicitor
- Holmes & Moffitt Solicitors
- Humphrey D Denis
- Hunt & Co Solicitors
- Ian Mallon Solicitors
- Irwin Mcgrath Solicitors
- Jack Mccann & Son Solicitors
- James Ballentine & Son
- James Boston & Sullivan Solicitors
- James Dornan & Co

- James F Fitzpatrick
- James G Rice & Co
- James H Rodgers & Co
- James J Macaulay Solicitors
- James McNulty & Co Solicitors
- James Murland & Co
- James O'Brien & Co Solicitors
- James T Johnston & Co Solicitors
- Jb & Rh Twigg
- Jb Stelfox & Co
- Jg Haughey & Co
- Jg O'hare & Co Solicitors
- Jj Haughey Solicitors
- Jj McNally & Co Solicitors
- John F Gibbons & Co Solicitors
- John F Mcevoy & Co
- John Fahy & Co Solicitors
- John Gh Wilson & Co
- John J Rice & Co Solicitors
- John J Roche Solicitors
- John Mcatamney & Co
- John Mccaffrey & Company
- John Mcevoy & Co Solicitors
- John Mcgale Kelly & Co
- John Mcgrane & Co Solicitors
- John P Slevin
- John Reavey Solicitors
- John Ross & Son Solicitors
- John W Pinkerton & Son
- Johnsons Solicitors
- Jonathon Mckeown Solicitors
- Jones Co Solicitors
- Joseph F Mccollum & Co
- Joseph Lockhart & Co
- Jp Hagan & Co
- Jw Mcninch & Son
- Karen Fox Solicitors
- Keenan Solicitors
- Kennedy Hughes & Co
- Kenneth Mckee Solicitors
- Keown Solicitors
- Kevin R Winters Solicitors
- King & Boyd Solicitors
- King & Gowdy Solicitors
- Kj Morgan Solicitors
- L Donnelly & Co Solicitors
- Lavery & Reid
- Law Quinn Solicitors
- Leeson & Co Solicitors
- Liam Vallely & Co Solicitors
- Lk Bannon & Co Solicitors
- Logan & Corry Solicitors
- Lundy & Co
- M Diane M Coulter
- M Ferguson Solicitors
- Macallister Keenan & Co
- Macaulay & Ritchie Solicitors
- Macauley Wray Solicitors
- Macdermott & Mcgurk Solicitors
- Macelhatton & Co Solicitors
- Mackenzie & Dorman Solicitors
- Madden & Finucane Solicitors
- Magennis & Creighton Solicitors
- Maguinness Andrew
- Maguire & Corrigan Solicitors
- Maguire Paul
- Malpas & Greene Solicitors
- Mark McNulty & Co Solicitors
- Martin King French & Ingram
- Maurice Mcivor & Co Solicitors
- Mccallion Keown Solicitors
- Mccallum O'kane Solicitors
- Mccann & Mccann Solicitors
- Mccartan Turkington Breen Co
- Mccartney & Casey
- Mccloskey Bernard Qc
- Mccloskey Solicitors
- Mccollum & Co Solicitors
- Mcconnell & Fyffe
- Mcconnell Kelly & Co
- Mccoubrey Hinds Solicitors
- Mccullough & Co
- Mcelhinney Mcdaid & Hegarty
- Mcelhone & Co Solicitor
- Mcevoy Sheridan Solicitors
- Mcfadden Perry Solicitors
- Mcfarland Graham Mccombe
- Mcgrady Collins
- Mcgrady Scullion Solicitors
- Mcgrigor Donald Solicitors
- Mcguigan Solicitors
- Mcguinness & Canavan
- Mchugh Lynam Solicitors
- Mcintosh Solicitors
- Mcivor Farrell Solicitors
- Mcivor Maurice & Co Solicitors
- Mckee Solicitors
- Mckenna & Boyd
- Mckenna Sweeney Mckeown Solicitors
- Mckervill Neilly
- Mckinty & Wright Solicitors
- Mcknight & Co Solicitors

- Mcmillan & Ervine
- Mcqueenie Boyle Solicitors
- Mcshane & Co Solicitors
- Md Loughrey Solicitors
- Messrs Ferguson & Logue
- Messrs Fisher & Fisher Solicitors
- Messrs Fj Orr & Co Solicitors
- Messrs John P Hagan Solicitors
- Messrs Mccanny & Keohane Solicitors
- Messrs Patrick Fahy & Co Solicitors
- Meyler Mcguigan
- Michael Flanigan Solicitor
- Michael Gillen Solicitors
- Mildred Breakey Solicitors
- Millar Mccall & Wylie
- Millar Shearer & Black
- Millinson Chris
- Minnis & Braden Solicitors
- MI White Solicitor
- Morgan & Murphy Solicitors
- Morris & Co Solicitors
- Morrison & Broderick
- Mr Ad Mcclay & Co
- Mr Aidan Quinn
- Mr Brett Lockhart
- Mr D Brewster
- Mr D Walker & Co Solicitors
- Mr George Farrell Lib
- Mr Ij Maccorkell Solicitors
- Mr Martin Wolfe
- Mr Mcmanus
- Mr Oliver M Loughran
- Mr Philip Aldworth
- Ms Sandhu & Company Solicitors
- Msm Solicitors
- Murnaghan & Fee Solicitors
- Murnaghan Colton
- Murnaghan Neasa
- Murphy & Mcmanus
- Murphy & O'rawe Solicitors
- Murray Mccourt Kelly
- Murtagh Breen & Co
- Napier & Sons
- Neal Mcallister Solicitor
- Nelson-Singleton Solicitors
- Nixon & Co Solicitors
- Noel Wilson & Co
- Norman Shannon & Co
- Nugent Majella
- O'connor & Moriarty
- O'hara John Mr
- O'hare Solicitors
- Oliver Roche & Co Solicitors
- O'reilly Stewart Solicitors
- O'rouke Mcdonald&Tweed Solicitors
- P Haughey & Co Solicitors
- Pa Duffy & Co Solicitors
- Paschal J O'hare Solicitors
- Patrick Diamond & Co Solicitors
- Patrick J Cole Solicitors
- Patrick Laverty & Co
- Patrick Mcmahon Solicitors
- Patrick Park Solicitors
- Patterson Donnelly Solicitors
- Patterson Taylor & Co Solicitors
- Paul Connolly Solicitors
- Paul Ferris Solicitor
- Paul K Nolan & Co Solicitors
- Paul Mcmullan Solicitors
- Paul Nolan & Co Solicitors
- Peter Dornan & Co Solicitors
- Philip Crossey
- Philip Gallen & Co
- Philip J Smith & Co
- Pj Mcgrory & Co Solicitors
- Porter & Mccanny
- Potter Michael
- Pr Hanna Solicitors
- Rh O'connor & Co
- Rm Cullen & Son Solicitors
- Rafferty & Boyle Solicitors
- Rafferty & Co Solicitors
- Rafferty & Donaghy
- Reavey & Co Solicitors
- Reid & Co Solicitors
- Reid Black & Co Solicitors
- Rg Connell & Son Solicitors
- Richard Barbour & Co
- Richard Monteith Solicitor
- Robert G Sinclair & Co Solicitors
- Robert Kennedy Solicitors
- Robert R Murtagh & Co
- Royal & Sun Alliance
- Rp Crawford & Co Solicitors
- Russell & Co Solicitors
- Sacker & Partner
- Sands Aidan
- Sc Connolly & Co Solicitors
- Sg Murphy & Co
- Shanks Mike Mr
- Sharon Keeley Solicitor
- Sheldon & Stewart
- Sheridan & Co Solicitors
- Sheridan & Leonard
- Skelton & Co
- Small & Marken Solicitors
- Sompo Japan Insurance Co

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| ■ Stelfox Solicitors | ■ Thomas T Montague Solicitors | ■ Tully & Co Solicitors |
| ■ Stephen Begley & Co | ■ Thompson Crook | ■ Vallely & Co Liam |
| ■ Stephen Perrott & Co | ■ Thompson McClure | ■ Wg Maginess & Son |
| ■ Stephen Scott & Co | ■ Thompson Mitchell | ■ Walker McDonald Solicitors |
| ■ Stephen Tumelty | ■ Thompsons Solicitors | ■ Ward Joseph |
| ■ Stewarts Solicitors | ■ Tiernans Solicitors | ■ Wb Thompson & Co |
| ■ Tara Walsh | ■ TI Solicitors | ■ William J Hasson Solicitors |
| ■ Terence Mccourt | ■ Tony Bergin | ■ Wilson Nesbitt Solicitors |
| ■ The Elliott Trainor Partnership | ■ Trevor Smyth & Co | ■ Wolfe Martin |
| ■ Thomas Doherty & Co Solicitors | ■ Ts Mcallister & Son | ■ Worthington Solicitors |
| | ■ Tughans Solicitors | ■ Zurich |

Amounts paid to the Departmental Solicitors Office and the Crown Solicitors Office are not included in the analysis above.

Engineering Staff: Translink Depots

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide a religious breakdown of the engineering staff currently employed across all Translink depots.

(AQW 1517/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have advised that the perceived religious affiliation of Engineering Staff across Translink depots is currently 67% Protestant and 33% Catholic.

Coleraine Harbour

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made to date in re-designating Coleraine Harbour as a municipal port.

(AQW 1523/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The draft Harbour Order required to transfer the ownership of Coleraine Harbour from the Coleraine Harbour Commissioners to Coleraine Borough Council is currently out to public consultation. The consultation closes on Thursday 2 December 2010.

NI Water

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the aspiration for NI Water, to be the number one utility company in the UK by 2014, is still in place; and what action it is taking to reinforce this message to the general public.

(AQW 1536/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that this aspiration forms part of the Company's current strategy. The overall strategy will be reviewed as part of the forthcoming periodic business planning process. The Company certainly aspires to continue to improve its service to the people of the North; to this end it is delivering both the best quality drinking water and the most compliant wastewater treatment in its history.

Irish Language Destination Boards for Buses

Mr M Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the (i) details; and (ii) cost of his Department's request to the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company to draft a plan to deliver Irish language destination boards for buses on the Metro Service 10 route.

(AQW 1539/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have asked the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company to investigate the possibility of introducing dual language destination screens on buses operating Metro 10 services. Currently there is no agreed or costed plan in place to provide these screens.

NI Water's Tender Contract C 398

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 648/11, for his assessment of the specification requirements contained in NI Water's tender contract C 398, particularly in relation to the practising of religious beliefs.

(AQW 1542/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the specification for tender C398 makes no reference to the practising of religious beliefs.

Head of Mechanical and Engineering Services within NI Water

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) when the current Head of Mechanical and Engineering Services within NI Water was appointed; (ii) when the post was first advertised; and (iii) how many applicants applied for the post.

(AQW 1543/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the current Head of Mechanical and Electrical Maintenance was appointed on 30 June 2008. The post was first advertised on 14 March 2008 and a total of 16 candidates applied.

NI Water Tender CO 71

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water and the current supplier of the NI Water tender CO 71 are subject to the legalities of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

(AQW 1545/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it is considered a "public authority" in its own right and is therefore subject to the legislative requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. Information in relation to work undertaken on its behalf by a third party, such as the supplier of NIW tender CO 71, is also captured under the Act.

Water and Sewerage Infrastructure in the Strangford Constituency

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much NI Water spent on water and sewerage infrastructure in the Strangford constituency since May 2007; and the planned spend for 2010/11.

(AQW 1551/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that approximately £41.5 million was invested in the water and wastewater infrastructure in the Strangford constituency from May 2007 to the end of March 2010. Planned investment during the financial year 2010/11 is £7 million.

Revenue-generating Assets

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to sell revenue-generating assets to off set any capital shortfalls.

(AQW 1552/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department currently has no plans to sell any revenue-generating assets to off-set capital shortfalls.

NI Water Tender C071

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development how NI Water monitors and ensures that embedded contract staff, engaged under NI Water tender C071, are treated with dignity in the workplace.

(AQW 1606/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that as both the Terms and Conditions of Contract C071 and the day-to-day operation of the Contract are the subject of legal action by a member of the contractor's staff, it would be inappropriate to disclose information in respect of any matters that may impact upon the ongoing litigation or which could in any way help to circumvent the legal process.

Nothern Ireland Railways

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the procurement of new rolling stock for Northern Ireland Railways.

(AQW 1628/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that production of the new CAF 4000 units has commenced. The first unit is programmed to be delivered in the first half of 2011, with subsequent testing and commissioning taking place on the NIR network. The manufacture and delivery of subsequent units (up to 20) will continue through 2011 and the first quarter of 2012. It is planned that the first unit will enter passenger service in the latter half of 2011 with all units in passenger service by 2013. The project continues to progress within budget.

Contracts

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 416/11, AQW 417/11, AQW 910/11 and AQW 911/11, what strategy he will put in place to deal with these issues.

(AQW 1643/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The Departmental Permanent Secretary has stressed the importance of following best practice procurement guidance with Roads Service and the NI Transport Holding Company (NITHC) Board and Accounting Officer.

NITHC/TRANSLINK

In the case of NITHC/Translink the following approach has been adopted:

- DRD officials requested assurance, that appropriate guidance regarding procurement was understood and being complied with, from the NITHC Board and its Accounting Officer at the quarterly meeting on 13 October 2010 ;
- DRD officials will continue to monitor NITHC/Translink implementation of internal audit report recommendations on procurement and specifically an Action Plan put in place to affect improvement in procurement practices;
- DRD officials will take advice from the DFP Central Procurement Directorate as necessary; and
- Further measures will be implemented if considered necessary.

In respect of Single Tender Actions the NITHC/Translink Board and Accounting Officer have been reminded of the relevant Central Procurement Directorate guidance and EU regulations. I am aware that NITHC/Translink have initiated discussions with Central Procurement Directorate on this aspect.

Translink is currently reviewing compliance with Procurement rules as part of ongoing controls to ensure Centre of Procurement Expertise status is retained. This review has identified certain matters to be addressed.

In respect of Contract Extensions NITHC/Translink has informed DRD that:

- a procurement process for pensions advisers commenced in early July 2010 with anticipated completion in the second quarter of 2011;
- the practice regarding ad-hoc legal services will be discontinued and new services will immediately be procured under the guidance and direction of the NITHC Head of Legal Services;
- the Head of Legal Services commenced a review of arrangements for legal services for the entire group. Arising from this it is anticipated that new Group legal arrangements will be put in place at the soonest possible opportunity. This will include Claims and Liability legal services.

Road Service

Roads Service has advised that with regard to the contract extension in 2007/2008, which was for legal advice on adjudication of contractual disputes, this contract was completed in February 2010 and has not been renewed.

Two contracts - Measured Term Contract for the Maintenance and Improvement of Street Lighting and Term Contract for Maintenance and Improvement of Structures - were extended in 2009/10 due to legal contractual issues which were preventing the award of new contracts.

Following Counsel advice from Departmental Solicitor's Office, it was decided to rerun both competitions. The new contract for the Measured Term Contract for the Maintenance and Improvement of Street Lighting was awarded in September 2010 and the new Term Contract for Maintenance and Improvement of Structures is due to be awarded shortly.

In addition, in an effort to avoid the need to extend contracts beyond their full term, consideration is being given to the following measures to deal with the increasing risk of delays in the award of new contracts due to legal challenges:-

- advancing the procurement programme for future term contracts, to allow time for challenges to be resolved before existing contracts end; and
- amending the conditions of contract for future Term Contracts, to allow their term to be extended by up to 6 months, in the event of receipt of legal challenges to the award of replacement contracts.

In respect of the Single Tender Actions, Roads Service has advised that each award was carried out in accordance with the Departmental procedures that were applicable at that time.

The Member will also be aware that Roads Service is still reviewing its contract for specialised IT Systems.

Economic Appraisals

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the money spent on economic appraisals, in each of the last four years, on projects costing under (i) £1,000; (ii) £5,000; and (iii) £10,000.

(AQW 1663/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Over the past four years, there has been no money spent by the Department on economic appraisals for projects costing under £10,000 as this work is undertaken internally.

Department for Social Development

Pensioners Bungalows on Ballyree Drive

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to visit Bloomfield Estate in Bangor to see the living conditions of pensioners in the bungalows on Ballyree Drive.

(AQW 1205/11)

Minister for Social Development (Mr A Attwood): I currently have no plans to visit the Bloomfield Estate but I will intend to do so when next in Bangor. I am aware that my predecessor, Margaret Ritchie, did visit the area in July last year to see the bungalows on Ballyree Drive.

Capital Assets

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what capital assets his Department holds that are deemed surplus to requirements.

(AQW 1263/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department currently holds 1100 acres of land originally vested for the development of the new towns of Antrim, Ballymena and Craigavon which are now deemed surplus and included within a disposal Programme to ensure their disposal without undue delay. There is also a property, Richmond Chambers, The Diamond, Derry. Land and Property Services within the Department of Finance and Personnel have been asked to advise on the disposal of the property.

Housing Executive

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development whether any of the reviews into the Housing Executive will consider how contractors, working for the Housing Executive, fulfill their TUPE obligations.

(AQW 1268/11)

Minister for Social Development: I announced on 7 October that I had ordered a team of specialists with audit, management, personnel and fraud expertise to go in to give the Northern Ireland Housing Executive an immediate governance audit. I then announced in the Assembly on 11 October 2010 that I had initiated a review of the Housing Executive as the time is now right for a major fundamental review to ensure that it is fit to discharge its housing and other responsibilities into the 21st century. The Review will examine the housing and other functions of the Housing Executive in detail, providing a comprehensive assessment of their contribution to housing and other Departmental and Government policy objectives.

I am aware of the issue in relation to the contractors and TUPE obligations. This issue is under consideration. Subject to the advice I receive and the view taken I will decide if this matter can be taken further.

Community Faiths Forum

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 547/11, to detail the instructions given to the Churches Community Work Alliance regarding appointments to the pilot Faith Forum; and whether these included a requirement for community balance.

(AQW 1293/11)

Minister for Social Development: Officials in the Voluntary and Community Unit of my Department met with representatives of the Churches Community Work Alliance (Northern Ireland) (CCWA (NI)) to consider invitations to the new pilot Community Faiths' Forum. Working closely together, my officials and CCWA (NI) were seeking to identify a pool of individuals with a proven track record of involvement in projects of specific relevance to the work of my Department. This meant that consideration was given primarily to individuals who had previous experience in working with either DSD policy led initiatives, with CCWA (NI) or with a background in addressing social need in the faith sector.

Officials and CCWA (NI) worked together to agree a suitable list for invitations to go out from CCWA (NI) working on behalf of my Department, mindful of the breadth and disparate nature of the faith sector.

I am content that the current membership of the Community Faiths' Forum represents a reasonable start and I have asked my officials to communicate my desire that the forum proceeds quickly with its work, to include the widest possible engagement with as many churches and faith based groups as possible. Furthermore I am confident that where officials and CCWA (NI) become aware of other faith groups active in community action, steps will be taken to ensure the pilot forum benefits from their contribution and experience.

Community Faiths Forum

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 547/11, to detail the text of the invitation issued to each member of the pilot Faith Forum.

(AQW 1295/11)

Minister for Social Development: Churches Community Work Alliance (Northern Ireland) (CCWA (NI)) invited members to join the pilot Community Faiths' Forum. Following one-to-one telephone conversations to explain the principles of the pilot forum, prospective members were asked to consider serving on this body over the next 2 years. Each telephone conversation was followed up with a 'briefing' document that was agreed between my officials and CCWA (NI) as a way of providing further detail on the proposed work of the pilot faith forum, outlining the objectives and areas of work it might engage in. On receipt of this document, prospective members were contacted again to confirm their willingness to join the pilot forum and advised of its first meeting on 25 May 2010.

A copy of the Briefing Statement will be placed in the Assembly library.

Community Faiths Forum

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 547/11, when he met with the Caleb Foundation; and if, as a result of this meeting, he is satisfied that the appointments to the pilot Faith Forum require no adjustment.

(AQW 1298/11)

Minister for Social Development: I met with representatives from the CALEB Foundation, including two MLAs, on Wednesday 15 September. The meeting was very constructive and most useful in providing me and my officials with details of the work of the CALEB Foundation and the family of evangelical churches it draws its members from. At the meeting I explained something of the process my officials deployed to identify members for the pilot forum and how CALEB was identified as a body that might provide a possible member, but that officials were unsuccessful in making contact with CALEB. However, recognising the desire of CALEB to contribute to the work of the DSD Pilot Community Faiths' Forum, I was pleased to invite the CALEB representatives to identify a suitable individual from their family of churches to join the pilot forum.

As I explained to those attending that meeting, the pilot faith forum is designed to be an inclusive body that encourages and supports dialogue between members drawn from all faith communities committed to serving the needs of our most needy and disadvantaged communities. In this respect I have asked my officials to work with the Churches Community Work Alliance (Northern Ireland), the body who administer the pilot forum, to ensure that steps are taken to engage with all churches and faith-based organisations that have experience and interest in this sort of work. I am content that these arrangements will ensure widest possible involvement of all interested faith groups. Regarding the future membership of the pilot forum, I can assure you that membership will be regularly reviewed. If it becomes clear that changes or additions to membership will contribute to the success of the pilot forum, then further adjustments can be made.

Temporary Promotion

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 19/11, how much it costs per day to temporarily promote a member of staff, broken down by grade.

(AQW 1316/11)

Minister for Social Development: It is not possible to give a precise answer to this question since the cost of any temporary promotion will depend on a member of staff's position on the pay scale for their substantive grade. However, indicative daily costs, based in each case on a member of staff who is temporarily promoted being at the mid point of their substantive pay scale, are provided in the table below. The figures given include employer's national insurance contribution and superannuation costs.

Temporary Promotion	Daily Cost
Administrative Assistant to Administrative Officer	£ 6.19
Administrative Officer to Executive Officer II	£ 6.86
Executive Officer II to Executive Officer I	£ 7.66
Executive Officer I to Staff Officer	£ 8.69
Staff Officer to Deputy Principal	£10.39
Deputy Principal to Grade 7	£18.76
Grade 7 to Grade 6	£16.65
Grade 6 to Grade 5	£20.22

Temporary Promotion

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 19/11, to explain the business reasons why each member of staff was temporarily promoted.

(AQW 1317/11)

Minister for Social Development: Temporary promotion arrangements in the Department are governed by the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policy on these matters. The business reasons necessitating and justifying the use of temporary promotion arrangements include the filling of vacant posts which are under review or where the post is expected to be of a short duration; the filling of temporary vacancies caused by the absence of staff, for example, on maternity leave or long-term sickness; as backfill for staff on secondment; and where staff are engaged on special exercises or projects which are by their nature time-limited.

Temporary Promotion

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 19/11, given that 205 staff have been temporarily promoted for a period in excess of one year, why these positions have not been filled on a permanent basis, particularly those at higher grades.

(AQW 1318/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department operates its temporary promotion arrangements to meet particular business needs that arise from, for example, time bound projects, staff absences such as maternity and posts under review. Temporary promotions can therefore extend to over a year where there is a business reason not to fill the post substantively. There is no difference between higher or lower grades in the consideration of temporary promotions.

In the current financial circumstances it is more important than ever for departments to manage their staffing as tightly as possible and, particularly in a context where staff reduction is a realistic possibility, to take steps to ensure that, where at all possible, vacancies are filled by staff at the substantive grade rather than on temporary promotion.

With this in mind officials have introduced a new level of objective scrutiny to test the business cases for bids for temporary promotion and to test the potential for substantive staff to be placed in vacancies, even those likely to be temporary in nature. In addition enhanced monitoring arrangements have been put in place, which include regular reporting to the senior staff team in the Department.

Redeployment Strategy

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Redeployment Strategy. (AQW 1320/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department continues to work on its workforce plans. At this point, given uncertainties over budgets, it is not possible to be definitive on my Department's staffing requirement going forward. However, given the pressures on public spending announced last week, the indications are that my Department will mirror the wider Northern Ireland Civil Service in being required to absorb funding reductions and this is likely to include the need for staff reductions

My Department will manage any staff reduction under its established policy and strategy for redeployment and, as part of this, will introduce measures such as redeploying staff to vacant posts, applying the Northern Ireland Civil Service embargo on recruitment and promotion, reviewing temporary promotion arrangements and releasing temporary staff. There is also the normal staff turnover through leavers and retirees that will be used to absorb any surplus staff

Economic Regeneration Projects in the Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the economic regeneration projects funded in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last three years, broken down by Neighbourhood Renewal area.

(AQW 1334/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is as follows:

Project	Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Brownlow Ltd - Bluestone Business Park extension	Brownlow	£829,000.00		
Craigavon Borough Council - Watersports Centre – Outdoor Pursuits Instructor Training	Brownlow	£59,100.00		
Craigavon Industrial Development Organisation (CIDO) – Exploring Enterprise	Lurgan		£5,241.66	
Southern Regional College -Steering to Success	Brownlow, Lurgan, NW Portadown			£135,150.75
Southern Regional College - Success to Employment in the Health Trust	Brownlow, Lurgan, NW Portadown			£59,043.00

Grants for Community-based Groups

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what grants are currently available from his Department, or any of its arms-length bodies, to community-based groups for capital build for premises. (AQW 1412/11)

Minister for Social Development: Neither the Department for Social Development, nor any of its arms length bodies, currently have any capital grant programmes open for application to community based groups. The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review will inform future plans.

Community Faiths Forum

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has identified any (i) geographical; (ii) gender; or (iii) religious under-representation within the pilot Community Faiths Forum. **(AQW 1427/11)**

Minister for Social Development: In my answer to AQW 1291/11 on the subject of membership of the pilot Community Faiths' Forum I indicated that the current membership contained too few women and was also light in terms of members from a rural community background. However, as I previously sought to indicate, it was considered more important to securing the involvement of individuals from faith-based initiatives with a proven track record in delivering social action projects. For this reason the choice of possible members was limited to a relatively small pool of known individuals. I would wish to point out that individual members on the forum do not formally represent any particular church or faith group. They are invited to participate on the basis of their individual experience and interest in areas of work that are seen as relevant to the policies and priorities of my Department.

I believe it was more important to approve the establishment of the pilot forum to allow it to commence its work quickly rather than delay it further. I have asked officials to monitor the work of the pilot forum and to work with the Churches Community Work Alliance (N.Ireland), our project administrators, to ensure arrangements are in place to receive input from any faith group that is making a significant contribution to meeting social need in areas of greatest deprivation. For this reason, following my meeting with representatives from the CALEB Foundation, I was pleased to agree to receive a nominee from the Reformed Protestant Evangelical family to join the pilot forum.

Housing Executive

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development the number of days, in each of the last five years, on which Housing Executive offices have been closed to facilitate away days. **(AQW 1429/11)**

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive does not close offices to facilitate away days. Staff are deployed from other Housing Executive offices to ensure services remain available to their customers.

Housing Executive: Research Duties

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people currently employed by the Housing Executive are carrying out research duties. **(AQW 1430/11)**

Minister for Social Development: There are currently 18 staff employed within the Housing Executive's Research Department.

Private Sector Grant Applications

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many private sector grant applications were approved in the East Londonderry constituency in the 2009/10 financial year. **(AQW 1439/11)**

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive does not collate information by Parliamentary Constituency.

However, I can advise that in the 2009/10 financial year in the Limavady and Coleraine Council areas there were 54 and 41 approved private sector grant applications respectively.

Housing Executive Office in Abbey Street, Coleraine

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many people visited the Housing Executive office in Abbey Street, Coleraine in the 2009/10 financial year.

(AQW 1441/11)

Minister for Social Development: The total number of visits recorded to the Housing Executive office in Abbey Street, Coleraine in the 2009/10 financial year was 4,435.

Housing Executive in the Foyle Area

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current average waiting time for a building contractor to be paid after completing grant-aid work for the Housing Executive in the Foyle area; and what measures are in place to ensure the prompt payment of contractors.

(AQW 1497/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive generally makes payments to the applicant and cannot pay contractors unless the applicant has assigned the payments directly to the contractor. The Housing Executive is not able to disaggregate payment performance to applicants and to contractors. However, during the first half of this financial year, the Housing Executive processed 103 grant payments for the Derry City Council area and the average length of time between inspection and payment was 27 calendar days.

The Housing Executive aims to make 90% of all Grants payments within 6 weeks of a request. Housing Executive staff will inspect the completed work before payment of any grant is made, normally when the major stages of work have been completed. The aim is to inspect works within two weeks of a request. Interim and final payment will be made when the work is deemed to be satisfactorily completed. The Housing Executive aims to make payments within four weeks of inspection provided that all relevant invoices, guarantees and certificates have been received.

Town Centre and Urban Regeneration in Coleraine

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development how much grant aid funding was designated for town centre and urban regeneration in Coleraine in each of the last three years; and how much of this money was drawn down by developers in each of these years.

(AQW 1522/11)

Minister for Social Development: The amount of Grant Aid funding provided by my Department for town centre and urban regeneration in Coleraine in each of the last three years is as follows –

- 2008/09 - £1,232,302
- 2009/10 – Nil
- 2010/11 - Nil

The grant aid spent in 2008/09 was on a public realm improvement scheme in Church Street, Kingsgate Street and New Row. This grant aid was paid to Coleraine Borough Council. None was drawn down by Developers.

Red Sky Contractors

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive instigated legal proceedings in relation to its contract with Red Sky Contractors for housing repairs in West Belfast; and if so, what was the outcome of these proceedings.

(AQW 1567/11)

Minister for Social Development: No legal proceedings have been instigated by the Housing Executive in relation to its contract with Red Sky Contractors for housing repairs in West Belfast.

Armagh Public Realm Scheme

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the outcome of the Armagh Public Realm Scheme.

(AQO 344/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Armagh Public Realm Scheme was completed in November 2009. The impacts of large public realm projects such as this may not be fully visible until a number of years after they are completed. For this reason, my Department carries out an interim evaluation 18 months after a project is completed and a full evaluation between 3 and 5 years after project completion.

In the case of the Armagh Public Realm Scheme, the interim evaluation will be carried out in the first half of 2011 and the full evaluation will be carried out in 2013. Although I do not have the benefit of an evaluation of the scheme at present, I have visited Armagh since taking up my Ministerial post and have been able to see the positive impact of the scheme at first hand. There is also index evidence gathered by Armagh City and District Council which suggests that the scheme has played a valuable role in helping the city through the current economic recession. It is interesting to note that an evaluation of Newcastle Public Realm is suggesting a 300% increase in footfall in the Main Street associated with Public Realm works.

Housing Executive: Governance Audit

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development when he expects to receive a report from the audit team's investigation into the Housing Executive's governance systems.

(AQO 345/11)

Minister for Social Development: I know that members are aware of media coverage of a number of matters relating to Housing Executive business which are the subject of internal and police investigations. In order to discharge his responsibilities to me, the Department's Accounting Officer needs to be satisfied and I need to be satisfied that the Housing Executive Board's governance systems are working effectively and its staff's operational systems are applied consistently. I therefore decided that the Permanent Secretary should ask his Internal Auditor to lead a team to examine and report on whether:

- The information and structure is available to the Board to ensure that it does and can: effectively identify and manage risk; prevent and detect fraud and error; hold senior managers to account; and ensure that the organisation operates and will operate at the highest standards of Corporate Governance;
- There are adequate controls used to manage risk, the prevention and detection of fraud and error, performance, procurement and asset disposal, including in relation to land and property, the procurement of repairs, maintenance, miscellaneous works and adaptations;
- The organisation has, or can have access to, appropriately skilled and trained staff to allow it to operate in its current form while preparing for and implementing both organisational and cultural change;
- The seven principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership – are being effectively implemented throughout the organisation

The team has a number of members from a range of government departments and will be supplemented by external expertise. Moreover, an oversight panel, cleared by the Permanent Secretary and including a further independent person shall be reported to by the audit team. The Permanent Secretary shall report to me. The aim will be to work through these issues with the Board to ensure that they are being addressed. I have asked for the group to report by the end of November.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his medium-term plans for the neighbourhood renewal programme.

(AQO 346/11)

Minister for Social Development: Neighbourhood Renewal is the Executive's flagship programme for tackling the underlying causes of poverty in our most deprived communities. My Department takes the lead in implementing the strategy but other government departments have and should work with DSD in advancing the programme.

I, for one, am committed to this programme. It is my clear intention to continue funding the Neighbourhood Renewal programme after 2011. I made substantial Budget Bids to do so.

I am committed to improving the lives of the 280,000 people who live in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and I am committed to supporting the community and voluntary sector to deliver much needed services in these areas. I will also work to ensure that what my Department funds under Neighbourhood Renewal produces value for money and produces results. In this we will reflect the lessons of the mid-term review as to what interventions make the most difference. I will also be encouraging those organisations which my Department funds to be working more creatively and cooperatively.

However, everyone should consider with caution the renewal fund, being developed over the heads of government departments with knowledge and expertise on renewal and, in great part, over the heads of the community and groups also with expertise and knowledge. The caution is required because it is not a good process and may therefore not produce maximum benefits for areas and people in need.

Public Realm Schemes

Mr W Humphrey asked the Minister for Social Development what steps his Department intends to take to ensure a more joined-up approach with the Department for Regional Development in relation to Public Realm Schemes in North Belfast.

(AQO 347/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department consults with the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service at an early stage when developing proposals for public realm and environmental improvement schemes for areas across Belfast. I am aware that in a number of recent schemes in north Belfast this consultation has led to adjustments to the original scheme design, with the Roads Service placing restrictions on the use of certain high quality materials including natural stone. In my view, the omission of natural stone and other premium materials in these schemes has greatly reduced their visual impact, particularly when compared to the high quality finish achieved with these materials in other parts of the city.

I raised my concern about the lack of a consistent Roads Service policy with my Ministerial colleague Conor Murphy MLA. The Minister for Regional Development has responded that he understands my concerns and he has made his officials available to discuss the issue further. I have asked my officials to report back to me following their discussions and I will write to the Member with an update in due course.

Social Housing

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development if and when he intends to introduce a developer contribution as an option to acquire additional social housing.

(AQO 348/11)

Minister for Social Development: It is disappointing that, to date, it has not been possible to introduce a system of developer contributions, which I believe is necessary to supplement the delivery of social and affordable housing here. Considering the constraints faced by public sector budgets, it is necessary to have a scheme in place as soon as possible.

This cross-cutting issue is being taken forward jointly with the Department of Environment, due to need for a Planning Policy Statement and consequent planning agreements.

I am keen to publish the relevant housing and planning policy documents which have been prepared for consultation. However, Minister Poots indicated on 1 July his wish to consult with party Ministerial colleagues before agreeing to take the matter forward. I did not at that time receive a note or have written reminders.

I hope to advance the issue as quickly as possible and believe it is important, necessary and should not be held up.

Urban Regeneration: Shared Space

Dr S Farry asked the Minister for Social Development how shared space is promoted within urban regeneration projects.

(AQO 349/11)

Minister for Social Development: The creation of shared space permeates the work of my Department and contributes to the Shared Future agenda and is one to which I am fully committed and one central to my portfolio since my appointment as Minister for Social Development in May this year.

Within urban regeneration, this takes the form of creating animated spaces: opportunities for events and celebrations that bring people together and promote social interaction and inclusion. In the context of Northern Ireland's recent turbulent history, this is seen by many as an issue pertaining predominantly to the Unionist and Nationalist communities. However, with our society becoming increasingly multicultural, this is now an issue that is much further reaching, and we need to ensure that all communities here, whatever their background or Section 75 group, are attracted to use the shared spaces my Department creates for people to live, work and relax in.

The creation of a shared space and opportunities is important, especially in deprived areas which are the focus of my Department's Neighbourhood Renewal programme. These areas, as a starting point need to be safer and more welcoming for all before moving forward and tackling disadvantage. In an attempt to address the needs of these communities, my Department meets and engages with community groups throughout Northern Ireland and provides funding via various initiatives including community capacity building programmes.

The provision of high quality and affordable housing is an area that can have a huge impact on the creation of a Shared Future. My Department's Shared Neighbourhood Programme is developing neighbourhoods where people choose to live with others regardless of their religion or race, in an environment that is safe and welcoming to all. I hope to make new and further advance in the near future on the issue of housing.

These matters sit at the very core of Government and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, which takes the lead on community relations issues must work in partnership with other central government Departments and agencies, including my own – if this is to be properly addressed. My Department already works with our partners in local government and the voluntary and community sector, to progress the community development and physical regeneration work which are key contributors to this task. Although I do not have primary responsibility for community relations, I am aware of the issues around interfaces, both in Neighbourhood Renewal areas and in town and city centres and DSD will do what we can to defuse them.

Moving forward, in a shared way, is an objective of all government and its departments. In doing so, the strategy must be based on reconciliation, create mechanisms that add to this outcome, not diminish it, and acknowledge each identity and how we can develop our sense of identity. The FMDFM CSI strategies should be critically judged accordingly.

Coleraine: Housing Executive Tenants

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants in the Coleraine Borough Council area are currently awaiting Housing Executive approval to buy their homes. (AQO 350/11)

Minister for Social Development: There are currently 14 live house sales applications in Coleraine district being processed. Of these 9 are awaiting valuation, 4 have had offers accepted and are with solicitors to complete and 1 has a contract awaiting completion.

There are no offers outstanding of more than 10 weeks, which is the Housing Executive's performance standard for house sales.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development what steps he has taken to ensure the continuation of neighbourhood renewal programmes after March 2011. (AQO 351/11)

Minister for Social Development: Neighbourhood Renewal is the Executive's flagship programme for tackling the underlying causes of poverty in our most deprived communities. My Department takes the lead in implementing the strategy but other government departments have and should work with DSD in advancing the programme.

I, for one, am committed to this programme. It is my clear intention to continue funding the Neighbourhood Renewal programme after 2011. I made substantial Budget Bids to do so.

I am committed to improving the lives of the 280,000 people who live in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and I am committed to supporting the community and voluntary sector to deliver much needed services in these areas. I will also work to ensure that what my Department funds under Neighbourhood Renewal produces value for money and produces results. In this we will reflect the lessons of the mid-term review as to what interventions make the most difference. I will also be encouraging those organisations which my Department funds to be working more creatively and cooperatively.

However, everyone should consider with caution the renewal fund, being developed over the heads of government departments with knowledge and expertise on renewal and, in great part, over the heads of the community and groups also with expertise and knowledge. The caution is required because it is not a good process and may therefore not produce maximum benefits for areas and people in need.

Household Condition Survey

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development when an up to date Household Condition Survey will be published. (AQW 1587/11)

Minister for Social Development: The key statistics of the House Condition Survey are currently being prepared for imminent publication on the Housing Executive website. The formal publication will be available in early 2011.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

North South Parliamentary Conference

Mr I McCrea asked the Assembly Commission to detail the (i) total cost; and (ii) the cost to the Commission of the North South Parliamentary Conference in the Slieve Donard Hotel on 7 and 8 October 2010. (AQW 1287/11)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr P Weir): To date, the requested costs of the North South Parliamentary Conference are as follows:

- i. Total cost: £35,517.57
- ii. Cost to the Commission: £17,758.79

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 29 October 2010

(AQW 8201/10)

Please see table below:

Academic Year			
College	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Belfast Metropolitan	1,416	1,063	1,132
Northern Regional	812	681	748
South Eastern Regional	676	631	466
Southern Regional	574	666	623
South West	516	576	351
North West Regional	975	844	916
Total	4,969	4,461	4,236

Source: Further Education Leavers Survey

(AQW 847/11)

I have been advised by NI Water (NIW) that additional audit support services provided to NIW since it was established on 1 April 2007 have been as follows.

External Audit Services

The following contracts cover the audit of the statutory accounts, the regulatory accounts, the whole of government accounts, and parts of the NI Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) Annual Information Return as specified by NIAUR and the Interim Principal Statement.

- 1 A contract was awarded to KPMG through open competition from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010.
- 2 Subsequent to this, a contract was awarded through open competition to KPMG from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2013 with an option to extend for a further two years.

Prior to 1 April 2007, the external audit service for Water Service was carried out under the direction of the NI Audit Office with no additional support.

Internal Audit Services

1. A contract was awarded through open competition to Ernst & Young LLP for the provision of internal audit services. The contract was for 2 years from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2009, with an option to extend for a further year to 31 March 2010.
 2. During the transitional period when NIW was seeking to establish its own internal audit function, the following staff substitution services were engaged:
 - ASM Horwath – engagement of a staff substitute for a period of 8 weeks from September 2008 to October 2008. This engagement was on the basis of quotations as the total contract value fell below the competitive tendering threshold;
 - FGS McClure Watters – engagement of a staff substitute for a period of 8 weeks from August 2008 to September 2008. This engagement was on the basis of quotations as the total contract value fell below the competitive tendering threshold; and
 - Deloitte – engagement of a staff substitute for a period of 12 weeks from January 2009 to March 2009. This engagement was awarded under the C328 Professional Services
-

Framework Contract. The C328 contract was established in October 2008 following a full competitive tendering exercise.

3. Following the full establishment of its own internal audit function from 1 April 2010, NIW co-sourced from Deloitte - engagement of IT Audit support staff on a staff substitution basis for a total of 8 days between August and October 2010. This engagement was awarded under the C328 Professional Services Framework Contract.

Prior to 1 April 2007, the internal audit service for Water Service was carried out under the direction of DRD Internal Audit function with no additional support.



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